

Book Reviews

Magic Shadows, by Martin Quigley, Jr.

Published (1948) by the Georgetown University Press, Washington, D. C. 161 pages + 14-page appendix + 8-page bibliography + 7-page index. 24 illustrations. $6\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Price, \$3.50.

Film historians, recording the origins of the motion picture, seem impelled to begin their studies with the Altamira cave paintings and then, working up slowly through Leonardo, Rogét, and Plateau, they finally come to Muybridge, Marey, and the Edison prescreen experiments. Actually, the relationship of their historic discoveries and devices to the history of the film itself is more than a little remote; Mr. Quigley has quite properly removed this chapter from the film histories and expanded it into a book that has its own validity. "Magic Shadows" carefully traces the slow accretion of scientific knowledge, the sudden acceleration in the mid-nineteenth century as early principles found practical application, and finally the simultaneous rush to the screen in France, England, Germany, and the United States in 1895-1896. Through it all Mr. Quigley stresses the internationality of the sources, the innumerable individuals who contributed to the scientific study of optics, and the universal appeal, not merely of films today, but of the more basic urge to project the shadow of reality. An elaborate chronology at once traces the growth of prescreen knowledge and emphasizes this multiplicity of its sources.

That same multiplicity is further revealed in the extensive bibliography that Mr. Quigley has appended to his book. Working intermittently on it since 1936, he has had opportunity to examine original sources both here and abroad, has covered printed material in Latin, French, German, and English, and translations from Greek and Arabian. But "Magic Shadows" is no mere compilation. The main lines of the study were laid down by the veteran film historian, Terry Ramsaye. In following them, Mr. Quigley has produced a study that is as readable as it is useful, as thoughtful as it is informative.

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New York 17, N. Y.

Photographic Facts and Formulas, by E. J. Wall and Franklin I. Jordan

Published (1947) by the American Photographic Publishing Company, 353 Newbury St., Boston 15, Mass. 353 pages + 10-page index + vii pages. 18 illustrations. $6\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Price, \$5.00.

This book is literally crammed with a multitude of both facts and formulas. The new revision represents a minor modernization of the 1940 edition to include references to recent developments such as coated lenses and the new color processes. The material for the most part is presented in a clear and readable fashion with a continuity of subject matter that was not evident in the 1924 and earlier editions. The publisher's claim, however, that it is a practical handbook of directions for all

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photographic operations in common use is not strictly valid. The increasingly important field of color photography, for example, is glossed over in twenty pages, less than half the space allotted this subject in the 1940 edition. On the other hand, the preparation of lantern slides, which is currently something of a lost art, is allotted sixteen pages, and a process as obsolete as the making and toning of printing-out papers is treated in exquisite detail.

Black-and-white photography is quite fully and capable handled, and the experimental photographic hobbyist will be delighted at the practical working approach to such subjects as image toning; the sensitizing of leather, fabrics, and wood; oil, bromoil, and other transfer processes; gum-bichromate printing; and carbon processes. There is a tendency, particularly in the chapter on "Photo-mechanical Processes," to pile up formulas and working directions without any real description of the process involved. In general, the material appears to have been drawn from a variety of sources without too careful an effort to unify it.

Such important fields as reversal processing and tropical processing are only sketchily treated, and there is a regrettable tendency to retain obsolete terminology in some of the older formulas—such as boracic acid and carbonate of soda.

Despite these objections, the book is a sufficiently useful compendium of photographic information to be a worthy adjunct to the photographer's library. However, full-scale revision rather than mere deletion and addition is overdue. In view of the enormous amount of pertinent photographic material available to the compilers, there is not space in a photographic handbook of modest size for an entry on "How to Make Marine Glue" or for five pages on "How to Resilver Mirrors."

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FORTY YEARS AGO

Political Subjects Desired

A correspondent of the "St. Louis Post-Dispatch" says: "I should like to ask through your columns why the moving picture show companies do not make arrangements for a reproduction of the proceedings of the Republican and Democratic national conventions that are to be held soon? It would be very interesting and instructive, and millions who are unable to go to the convention halls would like very much to see it. And other notable gatherings should be reproduced."

—*The Moving Picture World*, June 13, 1908