Despite the recent proliferation of reference books about children's literature, the school story has never been fully covered. This encyclopaedia will therefore be welcomed. It is, without question, a \textit{tour de force} which provides satisfactions not only for serious students but for enthusiasts of the genre. The range of stories and authors discussed is vast; both volumes are easy to read and well organised, comprising alphabetical studies of individual authors plus a series of essays on 'General Topics' from Adult School Fiction, Annuals and Evangelical School Stories to Plays and Films, and 'Penny Dreadfuls'.

For the girls' volume, most of the critiques and bibliographies are written by Sims and Clare, and, for the boys', by Kirkpatrick. However, for each volume, authorities on particular authors and subjects have contributed specific, signed entries. The Encyclopaedia's co-editor, Rosemary Auchmuty, has provided informative prefaces: she outlines in the girls' volume 'The Critical Response' to the genre and provides much stimulating food for thought. She makes the point that, because there has been no sustained tradition of research into school stories, this Encyclopaedia has 'huge gaps' and can to an extent be regarded as a work in progress. Kirkpatrick echoes this in his Apologia for the boys' volume, adding a little surprisingly that 'this encyclopaedia is not intended to be a serious bibliographical work, but rather a biographical work'. There are indeed bibliographical weaknesses and inconsistencies in both volumes but nevertheless the mix of critiques, biographies and bibliographies generally works well.

In a work of this size and scope there are, inevitably, errors, omissions and anomalies. Some of these suggest that the authors' readings of areas of the genre have been superficial. For example, the entry on 'Hilda Richards' (the pseudonym used by Frank Richards and others when writing of Cliff House School) classifies Richards' only full length novel about this school as 'a compilation' of previously published short stories, and this brief entry contains several
other errors. Also the essay on girls' Annuals lists those issued by the influential Amalgamated Press but surprisingly fails to mention the two most popular, longest-running and most school-based of these, the Schoolgirls' Own and School Friend Annuals. Similarly in the boys' volume the entry on W.E. Johns (who wrote only one school story for boys and one for girls) contains a small crop of errors.

However, it may seem carping in considering such a wide-ranging work to draw attention to these and other mistakes. More important are some of the omissions. These have occurred mainly because of the genderised division of the Encyclopaedia. What does one do, in a book specifically concerned with girls' - or boys' - fiction about the many fine, often 'breakthrough', stories set in coeducational schools? The authors make the point that these generally are outside the Encyclopaedia's scope, although the boys' volume does deal superficially with, for example, Gillian Cross, Jan Mark and Jan Needle. But, astoundingly, one of the best day-school stories ever written (Needle's My Mate Shofiq) gets no mention at all. Neither does Gene Kemp's awesome The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler, nor indeed any of her other school stories.

Surely, to provide adequate coverage of the genre, at least a serious essay on coeducational stories and their authors should be included in any future editions of this generally excellent Encyclopaedia.

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