specialize in Canadia, which is surely of major importance to both dealers and
collectors in this country.

Gauvin has made a brave beginning. It is to be hoped that in future editions the
full range of rare book expertise in Canada will be represented, and that the work
will be more carefully prepared.

JOYCE M. BANKS
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Library of Canada.)

Andrea Retfalvi, comp., with the editorial assistance of Ann Hilty.
Canadian Illustrated News, Montreal, 1869-1883: An Index. Toronto:
University of Toronto, Department of Fine Art, 1989. xvi, 368 pp.; $25.00

Nothing gladdens the heart of researchers in nineteenth-century Canadia more
than the appearance of an index to one of the publications of the period. So it was
with great anticipation that I settled down to work my way through Andrea Ret-
falvi's new work on the Canadian Illustrated News. Alas, I was disappointed. The
book is indeed 'An Index,' but it is not 'the Index.'

To index the Canadian Illustrated News [hereafter CIN] is certainly a daunting
task, and it is entirely possible that no single volume could contain all the elements
of an adequate index. Published weekly over a period of more than fourteen years,
the periodical is best known today as the principal source of late nineteenth-century
engravings of Canadian scenes. However, the CIN actually contained more text
than pictures. Each number included editorial comment on contemporary interna-
tional as well as Canadian activities, non-fiction articles on a variety of subjects,
poetry, fiction, and brief miscellanies. As a weekly compendium of Canadian per-
ceptions about what was significant both here and abroad, the CIN is a valuable
resource for historians studying the decades immediately following Confederation.
An index to the non-visual contents would be of great assistance to Canadian scholar-
ship in a number of fields.

Retfalvi's introductory material is brief and assumes that a reader who wants
detailed information about the CIN will have read Peter Desbarat's history of the
periodical and its founder contained in the Commemorative Portfolio published by
McClelland and Stewart in 1970. Because much of the Introduction is taken up with
listing all the categories omitted from this work, the compilers begin with the state-
ment that 'This index has been designed to allow a user to browse and get an impres-
sion of the contents of the CIN.' And indeed, it is a browser's, rather than a
researcher's book.

There are five nominal indexes, followed by a subject index. The nominal
indexes list artists, photographers, authors of articles, poets, and authors of fiction.
Nationality and birth and death dates are given for some names, but not for others
for whom the same information is readily available. In the literary indexes, some
pseudonyms are decoded, others are not. Information about people who appear in
more than one section is sometimes given at first mention, sometimes at all men-
tions, and sometimes at the last mention. Since none of these details is difficult to locate in other sources, it might have been better to leave them out entirely, rather than to enter them so inconsistently. Literary titles can be located only if a researcher knows the name of the author, since there is no title index for literary contributions, nor any title list by volume. The thematic subject matter of works of fiction and poetry does not seem to have been entered in the subject index, although as the periodical indexes of T.B. Vincent have shown, this is not an impossible task.

In general, the prose content of the CIN has been given short shrift, in favour of the illustrations. None of the shorter book reviews, some of which were quite pithy, none of the short theatrical reviews, none of the miscellanies, and none of the advertisements has been indexed, although these items are all of great interest to literary, social and intellectual historians. Columns on specific subjects, such as homemaking, which appeared almost weekly, have not been indexed except as a general subject heading under which long lists of page numbers appear.

Subject indexes are the most difficult of all to compile, since what appears to one person as the obvious focal point is not always the obvious subject to the mind of another. Illustrations are indexed by subject, not by title; for titles readers are referred to Andrea Retfalvi’s separately published Index to Illustrations which appeared a year ago, and to Karen Love’s Canadian Illustrated News: Articles on Art and Reproduction, published by the National Gallery in 1974. Browsing through this Index, the reader is made aware of the variety and breadth of subjects treated in the CIN, but locating specific information is not always easy. As a test, I attempted to locate in the subject index the articles and illustrations which were reprinted in the Commemorative Portfolio. In only about half the attempts was I successful.

In sum, the Index is useful for some general information and for finding certain types of specific references, but it is certainly not complete. It will be most useful for those seeking references to the visual records of the period. Diligent historical researchers are still going to have to work with the periodical itself, number by number, for a complete view of the contents. ‘The Index’ remains to be published.

M A R Y L U M A C D O N A L D
(Mary Lu Macdonald is a pre-Confederation historian residing in Halifax. She has published a number of articles on early nineteenth-century literary history.)


Much of what made Sir William Osler a famous and admired physician in his own day (1849-1919) falls outside the realm of his production as a writer. Osler was a gifted teacher, a colleague skilled at infusing energy and purpose into individuals and organizations, and an almost ideal clinician; this personal amalgam, despite the seventy years which have transpired since his death, is still the formula under which Osler is recognized in the medical world. This being the case, it is not surprising that Charles Roland and Richard Golden’s new bibliography of Osler’s writings,