cuss the general problem of selection for public libraries. Roden says:

"Book selection is not a process that will soon or easily come to rest upon a scientific foundation to which all its implications can be referred or upon which all its problems can be solved."

He concludes, however, that the era upon which the public library is entering may be one in which its primary objectives will shift from recreational to educational. Carnovsky develops this theory in "Community Analysis" in which he argues for a library that will give the people what they need rather than what they want. Of more practical application for the librarian, at the moment, are two papers based on actual practice: "Selecting Books for a Technical Department" and "Organization of Internal Processes in Book Selection for Public Libraries." "Book Selection in a Modern High School" and "Book Selection in a Liberal Arts College" complete the group.

In "Contemporary Fiction and Non-Fiction," George Stevens, until recently editor of the Saturday Review of Literature, applies the glass to the book reviewer to show how hazardous, and why, has become the task of book selection. Max Lerner, in "Important Books of the Last One Hundred Years—Political Science, Economics, and Sociology," lists ninety-odd titles with plausible reasons for his selection. A quibbler might suggest other books of equal importance, but no one can deny the excellence of the list as it stands. Other papers in the second group include "Evaluation of Historical Writing" by Louis Gottschalk, "Literature as Propaganda" by Henry Hazlitt, and "Popularizing Science" by Kaempffert.

Some interesting and laudable experiments have been made by publishers in recent years in the production of inexpensive, readable, and beautiful books. Illustrative of the papers in this group is Melcher's "The Publisher as a Factor in Popular Reading," in which he describes several of these experiments. He mentions, further, the publisher's influence in establishing new outlets for books, in making books more attractive in appearance, and in cooperative efforts to establish uniform prices throughout the country.

The Practice of Book Selection is the most interesting of the four volumes that have come from the Chicago institutes. It is addressed primarily to public librarians, but several of the papers have more general appeal, especially those on literary criticism. More attention to book selection in college and university libraries would have increased its usefulness. Without disparaging the quality of any of them, the space given to one or more of the papers might have been devoted to these institutional problems without appreciable loss to public librarians.

The readers of this volume would have been interested in the discussions which followed each lecture. In subsequent publications in this series, perhaps the essential and relevant portion of these discussions can be cited and included as appendices.—Benjamin E. Powell, University of Missouri, Columbia.

How to Read a Book; the Art of Getting a Liberal Education. Mortimer Adler. Simon and Schuster, 1940. 398p. $2.50.

"The first rule of the first reading of any book is to know what kind of book it is." So states the author on page 159 of the book under review. For those who have not yet read the book, it may be well to say what kind of book Mr. Adler...
has written. He has written an intro-
duction for a technique of reading for the
person who wants “to learn to read better,
and then, by reading better, to learn more
of what can be learned through reading.”
In the same book, however, Mr. Adler
has two other matters to present. He
offers a critique of current educational
practices and a list of “great books.” His
attack on the first of these and his defense
of the second are sometimes inserted in the
development of his major objective, a
technique for reading, and the whole book
is enlivened thereby.

Of his technique for reading this may
be said. He offers a pattern for approach-
ing a book and reading it that is complete
and satisfactory, although the application
of the pattern involves painstaking, hard
work for the reader who seeks to employ
it for the first time. While full of prac-
tical common sense, the book offers no
short-cut to self-improvement. It may
as well be stated frankly that the book
will be of little help to a poor, inefficient,
or unintelligent reader, or to any person
unwilling to read patiently through the
book with every attention. The author’s
careful beginning, his examination of as-
sumptions and his definitions are, in my
opinion, too much for the average reader,
but well worth the consideration of those
of us who earn our bread by reading or
by promoting reading. The gist of Mr.
Adler’s remarks on a reading technique
were once available in more succinct form
and would probably be more generally
useful than the present book. I am re-
ferring to his mimeographed address de-
ivered to the Alumni School of the
University of Chicago.

Mr. Adler’s concern with present edu-
cational policies and practices is well
known and needs no restatement here.

His criticisms turn constructive as he
speaks for a return to the reading of the
“great books” of our culture. In the
latter part of How to Read a Book these
classics (substantially the same as those
embraced in the curriculum of St. John’s
College) are listed and the publishers of
available editions indicated. Throughout
the development of his technique for read-
ing, Mr. Adler always aims at the reading
of these books. Consequently he says little
about the reading of imaginative literature.

While many of Mr. Adler’s arguments
on education and his proposed remedy are
open to debate, and have, indeed, been
debated, his desire to be helpful is sincere
and more than evident. The heart of
the book is practical. Of his style of
writing, the only adverse thing to be said
concerns the occasional sharpness of his
tongue.

Readers advisers can recommend this
book to intelligent readers who are ap-
parently sincere in their efforts to learn
through reading. The author’s extensive,
almost excursive, treatment may prevent
the average reader from finishing the book.
—Robert A. Miller, University of Ne-
braska, Lincoln.

A List of Books for College Libraries,
1931-38. Charles B. Shaw, comp.
American Library Association, 1940.
284p. $6.

“The Shaw List,” published in 1931
for the Carnegie Corporation of New
York to aid college libraries in rounding
out their collections, is familiar to most
American librarians. It was called the
“Second Preliminary Edition;” but the
1940 list is not a new edition but a sup-
plement to it. In fact, the use of this
supplement will be crippled if the earlier
list is not at hand, because the explana-