

carry the same message to many persons should be individually typed and personally signed. When possible, a handwritten note, however short, is even more effective. If all this sounds a little like some of the "service" propaganda of the luncheon clubs, it will hardly seem so in the context of particular instances which daily confront the college administrator.

Mr. Butterfield supports his thesis with many examples of the kind of letters which seem to him effective. The examples are useful and pertinent, but I find his own exposition, given briefly at the beginning of each chapter, more helpful. There is, for example, his list of those clichés in correspondence which can cool off the warmest of original intentions. Here are a few of them: "I take pleasure in," "your communication," "pleasure of a reply," "take this opportunity," "wish to acknowledge," "due to the fact that," "under separate cover," "I am happy to inform you." You can call them circumlocutions or simply bad English, but I suspect that almost anyone who handles much correspondence is sometimes guilty of using such stereotypes. Mr. Butterfield would have you not only increase the number of your contacts through letters but improve on their quality.

I assume that librarians in particular could take his words to heart. It may be that the formal and technical aspects of library train-

ing are worse than no preparation at all for the writing of frequent and personable letters. It may be that some librarians chose their profession partly to escape the personal contacts which Mr. Butterfield seeks to improve—though I do not know exactly why that should be. It may even be that college librarians are so frequently disappointed in the student, alumni, and faculty relationships they have already experienced that they are not anxious to increase them—although that doesn't sound logical either. But all chiding aside, how many of us look forward to receiving or reading letters from other librarians? (Mr. Butterfield, incidentally, makes much of improved relations by letter within the educational profession.)

An increased use of friendly, ingratiating letters would seem to be an inexpensive and not too difficult method of improving college library relations. The student, the alumnus, the donor to whom the letters might or should be written, is often a person with whom there is already some established relationship and if he is a stranger the challenge of establishing a good relationship by letter can be met largely at the librarian's own convenience. Friendly letters can be written by amateurs as well as experts. If any proof is needed on this point, the variety among Mr. Butterfield's examples has it to offer.—*Paul Bixler, librarian, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.*

## Guide to Title Page Russian

*Librarian's Guide to Title-Page Russian and Principles of Transliteration with an Introduction to Russian Law Books.* Elsie Basset. Columbia University Libraries, 1944.

What with the present interest in and growing importance of Soviet Russia, an increasing number of librarians is apt to be faced with the prospect of handling literature in the chief language of that country. They will find helpful information and clues to some of this in the handbook under review, particularly if they have no knowledge of Russian. The volume addresses itself especially to catalogers of legal literature.

It contains a section on language, in which spelling, pronunciation, and, of course, the vexing problem of transliteration are briefly discussed. Here one finds a list of "words

most commonly found on title pages of Russian law books with their most common meanings." Another section is devoted to the various phases of the cataloging process. Under the heading "Official Publications," the author describes the Russian calendar; lists the chief legal texts, from the eleventh-century *Russkaya Pravda* to the Stalin Constitution as well as the publications containing Soviet statutes; and supplies the entries for the government bodies of both the imperial and the Soviet eras. The volume concludes with suggestions for further reading on the topics treated and with a bibliography.

The author is generally well-informed and judicious. It is difficult, however, to see why *A Short History of Russia* by Mary P. Parmele is the only work on Russia's past which Miss Basset chooses to recommend. Within

the last twenty-five years several histories have been published which are superior to a book written at the turn of the century on the curious assumption that "the Russian people have had no history yet." *Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks* by Beazley, Forbes, and Birkett (Oxford, 1918) is an admirable account of the period indicated in the title, and there are several one-volume works, for instance those of Vernadskii and Pares, which bring the story down to date. As for lexicons, Segal's *New Complete Russian-English Dictionary* is certainly the largest but it leaves much to be desired, and second place should perhaps be given not to the antiquated Alexandrov volume but to the Boyanus and Muller dictionary, a third edition of which, "revised and enlarged," was brought out by Dutton early this year. That a "Russian-English Chemical and Technical Dictionary" has been announced for publication by a New York house (John Wiley and Sons) will be welcome news to the growing number of people dealing with scientific Russian. Miss Basset lists four grammars, including the first edition of Nevill Forbes's *Elementary Russian Grammar*. She fails, however, to list a second revised edition, using the new spelling, which appeared in 1943. It is also regrettable that she has not taken note of an equally excellent and more detailed presentation of the subject, that is *Colloquial Russian* by Mark Sieff, published in England in 1943 and brought out

here by Dutton this year.

The language material offered is irreproachable or nearly so. The statement on p.5 that "adjective endings *ago* and *yago* in the old orthography are *ogo* in the new" must be a misprint: *ogo* replaces only *ago*. And, of course, "the original form" of the name of the great Russian publicist is not Hertzen but Herzen (p.10). This reviewer must also take exception to a statement occurring on p.2. It is true that the alphabet, of which the modern Russian letters are a variant, was named for St. Cyril, the apostle to the Slavs. But it is generally held that he did not invent the Cyrillic characters. He probably devised the Glagolitic alphabet. It is not known who invented the Cyrillic letters, and there is a good deal of uncertainty as to when they originated. This must have been either shortly before or after 900 A.D. (St. Cyril died in 869 A.D.), as a substitute for Glagolitic. St. Cyril, Miss Basset writes, took the letters "from the Greek of that period, retaining only a few of the ancient Slavonic characters which had been used prior to his time." Many Cyrillic letters are indeed clearly modeled on Greek uncials; of the rest, three, at the most, may have been taken over from the Glagolitic alphabet. The derivation of the others is obscure. The error, being of no practical import, is not serious in a work of this nature, and on the whole the book serves its purpose very well.—*Avrahm Yarmolinsky, New York Public Library.*

## Reference Books of 1941-43

*Reference Books of 1941-1943*. . . . Third informal supplement to *Guide to Reference Books*, Sixth Edition, by Isadore Gilbert Mudge. Constance M. Winchell. American Library Association, 1944. 155p.

Miss Hutchins speaks of Mudge's *Guide to Reference Books* and its supplements as the "solid base of a small pyramid of lists of reference books, diminishing in size and importance the further away they get from the base."<sup>1</sup> This base is now enlarged by the third three-year supplement, *Reference Books of 1941-1943* by Constance M. Winchell.

Lists come, are checked, and often forgotten, but the Mudge-Winchell series is consulted over and over; it is used not only as a buying guide but also as a reminder and inspiration when working on reference problems.

Selection of titles in the basic work was made with the general library in mind,<sup>2</sup> and the same point of view has been maintained. The policy of inclusion as stated in the 1938-40 supplement is to list new works, new editions of works previously appearing in Mudge, and new parts of reference continuations which were covered in the *Guide*. New

<sup>1</sup> Hutchins, Margaret. *Introduction to Reference Work*. Chicago, American Library Association, 1944. p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> Mudge, Isadore Gilbert. *Guide to Reference Books*. 6th ed. Chicago, American Library Association, 1936. p. iii.