

In his "Long Life to the Library History Round Table," Pargellis suggested specific areas in which the round table might work: the lives and achievements of great librarians, with the idea of isolating a professional ethic; the historical development of particular libraries, and the history of libraries as it is related to the whole of intellectual history. One can scarcely imagine a better guideline than Pargellis gave, and yet one can hardly say that these essays represent complete fulfillment of the basic objectives. Perhaps the chief difficulty is that many librarians have not been trained to write good history.

At \$9.00 an anthology of American library history ought to include the best writing on that topic. In his introduction Marshall comments: "The anthologist . . . always becomes vulnerable to a slightly unfair kind of criticism; criticism for what he left out as well as for what he put in." Perhaps so, but if these essays warrant presentation in a book—"and only a book"—especially at this price, they ought to fulfill some useful function; and the anthologist should accept some criticism for the exclusions as well as the inclusions.

Particularly disturbing to this reviewer was the failure to include three major works of special value to those who are interested in library history. Jesse H. Shera's "The Literature of American Library History" (*Library Quarterly*, XV (1945), 1-22) might well have been the capstone of Marshall's anthology; and in my opinion no anthology of American library history would be complete without it. Another Shera article, "On the Value of Library History" (*Library Quarterly*, XXII (1952), 240-251) could properly accompany Shores's and Pargellis' essays in the introductory section. Exclusion of the third item, Verner W. Clapp and Edythe W. First's "ALA Member No. 13: A First Glance at John Edmands" (*Library Quarterly*, XXVI (1956), 1-22) is inexplicable in view of the heavy biographical bias of the book. In fact, the Clapp and First article could serve as a model for those who want to try their hand at a biographical portrait of one of the "greats." Some of the poorer reminiscences and the "Library Hall of Fame" might have been left out to provide space for these three items.

Does Marshall's book have value? Yes,

some of essays are worth having in book form, especially those on the less well known librarians. Perhaps, as the foreword suggests, the volume will also serve to stimulate the writing and publication of other works in library history. What the profession now needs is not another collection of readings but a solid monograph on American library history, preferably 200-250 pages long, which will give the overview from which further intensive effort may come. The author of such a history may make use of the data from these papers, but will have to go beyond them. Such is the state of the art that any prospective author is still going to have to do most of his own spadework.—Edward G. Holley, *University of Illinois*.

Publishers on Publishing

Publishers on Publishing. Selected and edited, with Commentary and an Introduction by Gerald Gross. Preface by Frederic G. Melcher. New York: R. R. Bowker Company and Grosset & Dunlap, 1961. 491p. \$5.00 (cloth), \$2.95 (paper, Grosset Universal Library).

The wonder grows as one reads these discursive, idiosyncratic, and seldom contradictory remarks on "an occupation for gentlemen" that books ever manage to get published. (That they have some difficulties getting distributed is a pressing problem only tangentially worried at here.) Fredric Warburg's comment on Sir Stanley Unwin's publisher's bible, *The Truth About Publishing*, candidly acknowledges, "My only criticism of this excellent book is that it tends to assume that publishing is a rational process."

The reader is impressed by the almost evangelical high-mindedness of publishers; and those who disclaim pretensions to high purpose cheerfully admit they are in the game for the fun of it. Uniformly they protest that only a fool would hope to make a fortune at so hazardous a pursuit. While insisting that any good publisher would have become a millionaire in another field, none would exchange the gain for the fun. This *leitmotif* takes on the tone of elegy for the reader tracing the growth of publishing from

the early nineteenth-century Daniel Macmillan ("You never surely thought you were merely working for bread!") to the brash Bennett Cerf speaking before the New York Society of Security Analysts in 1960 on publishing as big business, complete with profitable stock issues and mergers.

Thirty-six United States and English publishers in an approximate chronological sequence speak their minds—somewhat repetitively—on how they got started (many in almost hereditary dynasties), how to deal with authors, printers, agents, critics, and why they publish the lists that represent their names. Most write a neat, workmanlike (if uninspired and often pedestrian) prose, uniformly disclaiming any pretensions to being authors, which speaks well for their editorial abilities. Some few, excepting the versatile Michael Sadleir, are authors *manqué* and write with style, grace, and that incisive, witty rightness of phrase that makes literature of exposition. Curtice Hitchcock, John Farrar, and Fredic Warburg, had they taken the other side of the counter, should have found publishers, but I use a hesitant "should" advisedly. Their contributions, with novelist-critic-bibliographer-publisher Sadleir's, lend a pleasantly critical and literary flavor. The latter half of the volume, indeed, shows a marked increase in polemic: what is good literature, what is worth publishing, concern with censorship, and editorial and social responsibility. It is good to have in one place four of Frederic G. Melcher's editorials from *Publishers' Weekly* on books, publishing, and reading. Pervading all contributions is the acknowledged fascination of books and reading that makes publishers and librarians amateurs of the word. Hence this is a required handbook for all librarians, lest they neglect understanding why the books being published are published and that a publisher's list reflects a personality, often of an individual, who should be known.

The delights of the book are so many and one's gratitude to Mr. Gross so great for his editorial interest and industry, that the criticisms, excepting on the index, are somewhat fruitless yearning for what, probably impossible, might have been. The index is lamentable. Granted, the excerpts are from works to which the reader can turn hopefully for an adequate index. From another

publisher, the librarian might be less indignant at the one page excuse offered as an index.

Repetitiveness in the excerpts—we are assured by almost every publisher that manuscripts *are* read—unwarrantedly suggests to the innocent reader that the matters of concern to publishers are narrowly circumscribed. The denial comes, but often embedded in the expected and necessary concerns. This repetitiveness and emphasis on detail is probably ineluctable in an historically arranged anthology, giving space to each publisher's statement of creed. It suggests that a topical anthology, simply pointing up agreement or difference if not outright conflict, might be a valuable production. We might, however, end up with Sir Stanley Unwin again! The tantalizing passages on the histories of several publishing houses demand the preparation of a comprehensive history. If this anthology should inspire the needed scholarly and popular books on publishers and publishing, it will have more than justified the compiler's efforts. Librarians and students will be lastingly grateful for this convenient anthology, despite carping at the index.—*Betty Rosenberg, School of Library Service, University of California, Los Angeles.*

Slavic Collections

Russian and East European Publications in the Libraries of the United States. By Melville J. Ruggles and Vaclav Mostecky. (No. 11, Columbia University Studies in Library Service.) New York: Columbia University Press, 1960. 396p. \$10.00.

In 1957 the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies asked the Association of Research Libraries to participate in a review it was conducting "of the entire program of Russian-area studies." The committee engaged the talents of Melville J. Ruggles and Vaclav Mostecky for this assignment. The authors, in turn, have called on their own knowledge and that of other librarians to assemble in the present study a formidable array of fact and experience connected with