



Foreword

ROBERT L. TALMADGE

ESTHER J. PIERCY's career was marked by service so distinguished as to rank her a statesman among librarians on the national scene. It is appropriate to reproduce here the statement which appeared in the *LC Information Bulletin* nine days after her untimely death:

Members of the American library profession were deeply shocked and saddened by the death on January 10, following a very brief illness, of Esther J. Piercy, Chief of Processing at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore.

Miss Piercy was widely known for an extraordinary number of valuable contributions to the practice, technique, and literature of librarianship, perhaps most notably as editor of the quarterly journal *Library Resources & Technical Services* and its predecessor, *Journal of Cataloging and Classification*, from 1950 until her death. In 1958 she was recipient of the most coveted award in the technical services field, the Margaret Mann citation, chiefly for her leadership in editing this publication. Miss Piercy was the author of many articles and of the book *Commonsense Cataloging* (1965), which has already come to be accepted as an authoritative textbook on the subject. Throughout her career, she was a member of numerous boards and committees of the American Library Association, including its Executive Board (1962-66), and of other professional groups. In 1961-67 she was a member of the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee, and in 1959-60 she was director of the consumer reaction survey of the cataloging-in-source experiment conducted by the Library of Congress.

Educated at the Universities of Idaho, Illinois, and Chicago, Miss Piercy served in technical services in libraries of New Mexico, Illinois, and Massachusetts before going to Baltimore. At the Enoch Pratt Library she was responsible for planning and directing a complete recataloging and reclassification project that was underway

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at the time of her death. In addition to her professional library activities, she was a frequent book reviewer for the *Baltimore Sun*. Esther Piercy will be remembered by her thousands of friends as friendly, kind, conscientious, imaginative, yet always governed by the quality named in her book title, common sense.

In April, 1964, Miss Piercy accepted an invitation by the Publications Board of the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library Science to be the editor of an issue of *Library Trends* on "Cooperative and Centralized Cataloging." During the following year she developed a detailed outline, including a synopsis of each proposed chapter, and a list of suggested authors. (As a matter of fact, with typical imagination and flair she also worked out, in only slightly less detail, an alternative design for the issue, and gave passing consideration to a possible third approach.) In April, 1965, the Publications Board approved her first choice, and assigned July 1967 as the date of the issue. As the ensuing twenty months moved along, Miss Piercy obtained acceptances from her authors, gave them their instructions and set them to work, and in several instances reviewed their outlines or rough drafts—all this amidst an almost incredible variety and weight of other pressures. Final manuscripts were due in December, 1966; about half of them were in Miss Piercy's hands, but she had not yet begun their detailed review, when she was stricken as she was about to emplane for New Orleans and the midwinter meeting of the American Library Association.

In early February Managing Editor Goldhor inquired of me as to my willingness to read the manuscripts; with a sense of being uncommonly privileged, I gladly agreed to do so. It was disquieting to learn soon thereafter that I was actually expected to assist in preparing the manuscripts for the press, a function I undertook with qualms only deepened by an acute consciousness of the extensive knowledge, keen insight, and skilled editor's touch Miss Piercy would have brought to this final step. All laurels for what is clearly a solid and valuable contribution to our professional literature must go to her formative work, and to her authors for their accomplished performance under her leadership; when it comes to the finishing touches, I must be held accountable for whatever shortcomings remain. Granted my persistent misgivings, my portion in the enterprise has been an absorbing and rewarding experience.

Beyond emerging with a sense of gratitude to each of the authors, I am indebted to editorial assistant Mrs. Barbara Donagan, who was

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constantly a source of indispensable aid and counsel, and of deft solutions to a succession of dilemmas. There is an obligation above all to Dr. Tauber, for his introductory chapter. From the first, Miss Piercy had hoped and intended to write it, but, also from the very first, she had had Dr. Tauber in mind as her backstop if for any reason she was unable to do so. He consented in the course of our first telephone conversation, and came through not only in his typically consummate fashion but in record time.

Finally it should be recorded that the conjunction of my name with that of Miss Piercy, as editors of this issue, has been done by the Managing Editor and against my own desire and recommendation. It has indeed been a high privilege for me just to be associated with this work of Esther J. Piercy.