

and place of publication. Below each listing are the capital letter symbols indicating the library or libraries in which the titles are located, with the volume number, the year in parentheses, the issue number, viz:

- 1618 VIRCHOWS Archiv für pathologische Anatomie und Physiologie und für klinische Medizin. Berlin.
BR FS NM WK 321(1951)-
CB 321(1952)2-

Presumably, when a volume is complete and the entry open, the year only is shown. In a few instances certain inconsistencies in entry data were noted. Instances of indicating holdings by months of issue instead of by numbers for a single title within a single entry were noticed, viz:

- 1062 MODERN drugs
SN 1952
TAH 1952 1 4 7-8 10-
TS 1952 Jan. Apr.

But such inconsistencies appear infrequently; and although this reviewer had been appraised of one error in entry and of one publication incorrectly having two entries under two different titles for the same periods, these points were not observed.

This publication was begun, according to the editors, during the latter part of October or early November, 1952. Six months later, the participating librarians had completed submitting the data requested relating to their library holdings—a noteworthy achievement. The editorial committee completed its compilation and sent the work to the printer in the summer of 1953. That it remained in the printer's hands unduly long and was not ready for distribution until March 1954 is regrettable, for a considerable time lag in the currency of the list's entries resulted.

Yet, by and large, the publication of the *Union List of Foreign Medical Periodicals, 1941-1952*, is a creditable achievement. Not only is it a valuable addition to medical bibliographic tools, but its completion is a tribute to the individuals responsible for its undertaking, and to those who put much time and effort into the work. It is decidedly a step in the right direction of furthering cooperative undertakings for the general gain of bibliographic control and librarianship in Japan. Librarians of Japan, as a group and individ-

ually, may well observe and profit from the example of fruitful results stemming from cooperative professional enterprise. It is an approach to bibliographic control which, for the most part, is superior to individual bibliographic pursuit which, in the past, has been a strong tendency among librarians in Japan.

The *Union List of Foreign Medical Periodicals* is a further contribution to the development of interlibrary loan practices in Japan, and as such, it is an essential tool in the medical literature field. And, outside of Japan, as well, it may serve as an excellent universal checklist of medical serial publications.—*Robert L. Gütlér, Japan Library School, Keio-Gijuku University, Tokyo, Japan.*

Historians, Books, and Libraries

Historians, Books, and Libraries: a Survey of Historical Scholarship in Relation to Library Resources, Organization and Services. By Jesse Hauk Shera. Cleveland, Western Reserve University Press, 1953. xvi, 126 pp. \$3.50.

"History is little more than romance to him who has no knowledge of the succession of events, the periods of dominion, and the distance between one great action and another." So wrote Dr. Johnson nearly two hundred years ago, in a plea for adequate knowledge of chronology. Perhaps everyone will grant that dates and chronology are important, although most people feel no personal obligation to keep them in mind. But the record of historical scholarship both before and since Dr. Johnson is one of continuing uncertainty as to the meaning of history. Perhaps Herodotus, who implied that history really was little more than romance, seems about as adequate to many readers today as do Vico, Carlyle, Taine, Spengler, Beard, Toynbee, and the Marxists, all of whom by their differing philosophies have written history as prophecy. Many earnest followers of the great von Ranke have become so enmeshed in all "the facts as they happened" that they are unable to determine the truth, a difficulty the *New York Times* has likewise found puzzling. It is therefore scarcely astonishing that

many brilliant historical narrators (Sir Winston Churchill being one of the most recent) have offered the narrative only, declining judgment; and the late Dr. Fisher of Oxford in a frequently quoted paragraph admitted that he could find no pattern or rhythm in historical events.

To this enormous and complicated topic of the meaning of history, Dean Shera has added considerable passages upon the history of librarianship, a sample of the approved method of composing history, and some guidance to the librarian who wishes to know how and why to collect history or how to make use of biography and biographical fiction to guide his younger readers toward history. This is a large task to attempt in 126 pages.

Dean Shera began his thinking in constant consultation with Ralph Beals, and he worked out his course in detail with the help of Professor Margaret Egan. The proposal was to prepare a course that would correlate for the potential librarian what he ought to know of the ideas of history, of the ways of composing history by research, and of the guidance needed both by scholars and by general readers in the whole realm of history. The purpose that inspired the proposal seems to me wholly estimable; whether a successful course can be built about this syllabus in the crowded curriculum seems not quite so certain.

The first two chapters are somewhat self-conscious and elaborate attempts to delimit or define historical study in libraries, and they might almost be dispensed with. But the first half of the book is largely given over to the history of historical writing. There is much important material here, useful comments on the ways of the great historians and some charting of the trends of thought; almost every paragraph contains material that ought to be presented to students, material that I have presented to students from time to time. But a doubt persists: does this syllabus perhaps fail to do enough by attempting too much? A conscientious but myopic student could study this and become an opinionated and useless librarian; a less careful student could read this and retain only a most confused list of names. For a third group, the students with broad backgrounds in the literature of history and considerable interest in the philosophy of history and in historiography,

this material will prove stimulating and helpful as collateral reading. But even for such specialized students, the syllabus may prove misleading or unsatisfactory: in the interests of brevity, Gibbon is dismissed as a man who oriented his history about the principle of human irrationality, while Herder and Bishop Percy are given undue prominence as apparently the chief causes of von Ranke; perhaps also because of the need for brevity, ideas like historical causation, the sociology of history, and "scientific" history are assumptions in the syllabus instead of phenomena in various concepts of historiography. The syllabus method also leads to such stylistic awkwardness as a considerable discussion of the "New History" in which full understanding of the term is assumed, and a reference to "the earlier work of Rhodes" leaves a reader with no hint of who Rhodes was.

It seems possible that this volume will prove more helpful for collateral reading, perhaps stimulated by only two or three lectures. As the material is here presented, one has difficulty in using it (chiefly the first and last sections) as a practical guide to historical literature; and yet the long section on the history of historiography lacks the stimulating quality of books like Rowse's *Use of History* or Gooch's *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, books for which this syllabus can find no place.

Some practical matters may be noted. One would like an index, not only as sound policy in a book of this nature but as a way to identify and compare different assertions, to pull text and bibliographies together, and to make certain one has not overlooked a major man or theme. An analytical index might partly compensate for the present failure to trace continuing ideas like recurrence, progress, moral law, and divine plan. Secondly, one could wish for a more attractive format: the off-set printing from unjustified type-written lines, reduced to a painful smallness and printed with absurdly inadequate margins, reflects little credit on the aesthetic judgment or the scholarly interest of the publisher. And then the normal tendency to read proof less carefully in such book work has allowed annoying and careless errors to stand, though many of them do little harm. In a new edition these can easily be removed, along with the odd definition of textual criticism as the

"higher criticism" instead of the seldom-used phrase "lower criticism."

If one could hear Dean Shera's own lectures, and then browse in this book to recall or supplement what he said, one would have an excellent new unit in the curriculum. But as a general work that might explain librarianship to historians and historiography to librarians, it suffers from having attempted to survey too much. Ideas are present, combative ideas, on every page, but the reader must fill in the pages with more knowledge of philosophy and sociology, as well as history, than the typical library school student possesses.—*Allen T. Hazen, Columbia University.*

What Shall I Read Next?

What Shall I Read Next? A Personal Selection of 20th Century Books. By F. Seymour Smith. [New York] Cambridge University Press. Published for the National Book League. 1953. 232 pp. \$2.00.

Mr. Smith's earlier book-lists, always unpretentious and always useful for quick refer-

ence or for general guidance, include *The Classics in Translation* (1930), some briefer guides like *Reading History* (1950), and *An English Library* (1943). To the last-named list Mr. Smith has now in some sense furnished a sequel (his word is complement), *not* a parallel volume: the *English Library* is a conventional recording of the classics in all fields, with concise introductory comments and almost no individual annotation, to make a list of books readily recognizable as classics by any reader; and it is a list not readily available elsewhere in any such concise form. By its nature the *English Library* is unexciting and impersonal ("... all those books which have come to be regarded as English classics"), but by its nature it is useful.

The sequel, *What Shall I Read Next*, is by its nature more personal, and by that very quality more attractive. No reader can be excited by finding Gibbon in the earlier list; but one can be pleased to read, for example, in the new book that Geoffrey Gorer's *Americans* is "a study in national character written with wit but no malice; with penetration and

1955 ACRL BUILDINGS INSTITUTE

As a pre-conference activity of the 1955 Midwinter ALA meeting, an *ACRL Library Building Plans Institute* is tentatively being programmed for January 28-29. If you would care to present the plans of your proposed building at this Institute, please write to David Jolly, Chairman, ACRL Buildings Committee, Deering Library, Evanston, Ill.

If you wish to attend as a participant, please send your check in the amount of \$5.00 to the above address by November 15. *Registrations will be limited to 75.*

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