

arly communication—university presidents, provosts, deans, lab directors, members of the professoriate, academic librarians, intellectual property lawyers, authors, and publishers. Highly recommended for the libraries of major research universities.—*Allen B. Veaner, University of Arizona.*

1. Sara Rimer, "A Caution against Mixing Commerce and Academics," *New York Times*, 16 April 2003, p. A16 [national edition].

2. Andrew Pollack, "Wrangling May Delay Peanut Allergy Drug," *New York Times*, 13 March 2003, pp. C1, C6 [national edition].

3. Charles C. Mann, "The New Cloning Superpower," *Wired* 11 no. 1 (Jan. 2003): 114—23, 142—43.

Raven, James. *London Booksellers and American Customers: Transatlantic Literary Community and the Charleston Library Society, 1748–1811.* Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Pr. (*The Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World*), 2002. 522p. alk. paper, \$59.95 (ISBN 1570034060). LC 2001-3345.

This astonishingly informative and highly accomplished study owes its existence to two events. The first came in August 1758 when a representative of the private Charleston (then "Charles Town") Library Society copied a letter to a London bookseller in a blank book. Over 200 years later, in the summer of 1994, scholar and author James Raven of Oxford University opened the volume in the still membership-supported society's search room. Fortunately, it was he who found it, for in the hands of a less-able scholar and writer, a far inferior study, or none at all, would have resulted.

Letters between colonial and early republic libraries and their booksellers are rare. Rarer still is the insight and prodigious learning Raven brings to the topic. The letters, 120 in all, going to 1811, with some gaps, are reproduced and annotated in an appendix. To most readers they would reveal nothing, but with Raven as a probing and relentlessly curious guide, we see opening before us a vanished

world of not just the book trade, but intellectual, cultural, and social life as well. So many topics are revealed that the reader gets the sense that he has looked through a microscope; what was once thought just a drop of water is really a teaming vital universe. And perhaps the analogy is apt. For Raven uses the letter book as a lens that not only allows minute inspection of objects and themes not easily seen, but also one that brilliantly spreads and intensifies light.

To set the letters in context, Raven summons up the world and assumptions of its senders and recipients. The first chapter discusses the colonial book traffic and ideas of the transatlantic community; next comes a view of the growth of intellectual life and book providers in Charleston, S.C. A dissection and reflection upon the society's increasingly upscale and elite members (men, no women) follows. Other chapters delve into the society's growth from its founding in 1748; its difference from other colonial library societies in mission, members, and success; and a view to what these divergences may mean. Raven writes not just of Charleston's library and people; there also is information on Philadelphia, New York, Savannah, Baltimore, and other American and British libraries (all appearing under their names and subjects in the excellent index). Chapters on the booksellers, wholesalers, and ordering process are eye-opening. The time lag between ordering a book and receiving it tried the patience of many of the society's testy librarians, and they scolded their suppliers continually, whether they deserved it or not (and more often than not it appears they did). By examining the books ordered and reconstructing the library's catalog (the subject of another appendix), the author notes the changing tastes of the city and, again, draws larger conclusions. Diagrams show the topics of interest to Charleston readers along with their percentages over time, and other charts reveal the publication dates of Library Society titles.

The summing up in the final chapter is as succinct as it is useful, for the book at-

tempts and succeeds in so many different arenas. Not only is there information on American, English, and transatlantic bookselling (covering such minutiae as the bindings that books were shipped in), but also much social history and even the beginnings of a revisionist view of Charleston's intellectual life. The evolving position of women is noted, as is the changing relationship between the once-colonial city and country with Great Britain. The rather dry title of this volume is perhaps the only thing one can fault; but then it is very difficult to do a book of such scope and accomplishment justice.—*Harlan Greene, Charleston County Public Library.*

Rota, Anthony. *Books in the Blood: Memoirs of a Fourth Generation Bookseller.* Pinner, Middlesex, Eng.: Private Libraries Association; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2002. 313p. \$35 (ISBN 0900002964 [U.K.]; 1584560762 [U.S.]). LC 2002-405109.

Books in the Blood is the 1997–1998 presentation volume for members of the Private Libraries Association. The PLA is an “international society of book collectors, founded in 1956, its series of monographs on specialised aspects of the mania have been much appreciated by collectors at large.” Rota also has published *Apart from the Text* and numerous articles and book catalogs, and he has lectured extensively on rare books and book collecting.

As the subtitle denotes, Anthony Rota is a fourth-generation bookseller who joined his family business in 1952 and became the company president upon his father's untimely death in 1966. Rota grew the company, Bertram Rota Ltd., into one of the most successful rare book dealerships in Great Britain and has earned the respect and recognition of his peers, being elected to the presidency of both the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association (ABA) and the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB). He also strikes one as an extremely honorable and honest man and businessperson. Once, when asked to speak to a group of new antiquarian book

dealers, he reminded them that the “book-sellers made the rules of book collecting and if they themselves cheated, the whole thing, not just their livelihood but their lives would be totally without meaning.”

Written in an almost chatty, but at the same time, erudite style, *Books in the Blood* can be dipped into for a pleasurable short interlude or an evening's entertainment. It sets forth the author's nearly fifty years of work with rare books, special collections, and manuscripts through a series of anecdotes and vignettes, mostly about book collectors, librarians, and other rare book dealers he has known during his career. In the prologue, Rota lists some necessary attributes for a successful bookseller; they include a good intelligence network that gives early warning of what is coming up, thorough knowledge of the market, complete confidence between client and dealer, sharp negotiating skills, networks of experts on call, and perhaps most important, “a great deal of luck.”

When Rota began his career in 1952, there were no academic or training programs for antiquarian booksellers, so he learned his trade through reading and experience. He characterizes the latter as the “sit by Nellie principle, which literally involved sitting next to someone who was doing the job, watching them very closely and then trying to feed a leather binding, catalogue a first edition, make a simple collation or whatever the job might be.” The former included reading John Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors* (1952), Percy Muir's *Book Collecting as a Hobby, in a Series of Letters to Everyman* (1945), and Ronald McKerrow's *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students* (1927), as well as many other articles and books published by his fellow booksellers or rare book librarians. He also read “voraciously 19th and 20th century English and American literature in which the firm specialized.”

Among the most interesting sections of these memoirs are the stories about the customers whom the author has worked with through the years, not all of whom have been admirable or honest. The author is not shy about revealing foibles and