

the number of articles published in each journal for the period covered. Brown correctly points out that such a list is not necessarily related to the value of the contributions in those journals or to their usefulness to the scientist, but that there is a relation between the periodicals with the most articles abstracted and the periodicals most likely to be requested by the user who works through the abstracts.

Brown emphasizes the value of these lists for programs of cooperative acquisition and storage, and indeed they may have their greatest value for these purposes. The lists might well be studied by groups of libraries in close geographical proximity to help evaluate and to improve the adequacy of their composite collections. The author refers to the project of the Midwest Inter-Library Center, in which MILC will attempt to obtain all of the periodicals abstracted by *Chemical Abstracts* which are not held by member libraries. MILC is working out a similar program for the biological sciences. The lists in this volume are not complete enough for a large regional undertaking like MILC, which should be securing, not titles frequently cited, but rather those rarely cited.

The author has compiled a useful consolidated list of all of the journals cited in the eight fields. Almost 20 per cent of the journals listed by Brown appear on more than one list. Librarians need to consider the over-all values of periodical titles when deciding whether or not to purchase them. Of value to institutions building up back files are the summaries on comparative importance of earlier and more recent publications in each field. The university librarian planning branch libraries for the sciences can profit by data which show, for example, that approximately 12 per cent of the references in mathematics or in chemistry are to journals prior to 1924, while only 2½ per cent of physics references go back of 1924.

This volume is considerably more than a report on reference counts. Methods used by libraries for the selection of serials are summarized and evaluated. In this chapter and in another on the acquisition, storage, and discarding of scientific serials, the author has called on his years of experience in developing one of the country's best scientific collections at Iowa State College to interpret the

results of this study in terms of practical advice for those who are called on to supply research scientists with basic literature sources.

This volume is the first clothbound book in the Association of College and Reference Libraries monograph series. The ACRL has done well to put it into this form, and it is to be hoped that future substantial contributions can be given similar treatment.—*Melvin J. Voigt, University of California Library (Berkeley).*

Boston Public Library

Boston Public Library: A Centennial History. By Walter Muir Whitehill, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956. 274p. \$4.75.

Institutions are necessarily what the ideals and acts of individuals make them; but not all institutions are fortunate enough to have a historian whose literary talent and lively interest in people are equal to the task of demonstrating the fact. The Boston Public Library, the first of the great American public libraries, has found such a historian in Dr. Walter Muir Whitehill, the capable director of another distinguished library, the Boston Athenaeum. From the earliest page, wherein he relates his own initial acquaintance with the library, to the final paragraphs of commendation of the current mayor for his support of the library's program, the volume abounds in human interest as the story of men's attempts, some wise, some foolish, some brave, some timid, to create a collection of books with the essential services to the public that, as George Ticknor, one of the library's founders, wrote in 1851, would "carry the taste for reading as deep as possible in society."

The vagaries of fate are apparent in both the first and the latest of the great benefactions: the first when Joshua Bates, the London banker, recalling his own experience as a poor boy in Boston, responded from across the sea with a promise of fifty thousand dollars when Ticknor sent out his noble printed proposal for a public library open to all; and the latest, when the library received in trust the million dollar gift of John Deferrari, whose amazing career from fruit peddler to millionaire was guided, unknown to the li-

brarians, by its books on real estate and business.

The reader has ample material here upon which to reflect on the need for a scholarly and farsighted acquisitiveness in librarians, coupled with solid and sensible accomplishments in administration. The Boston Public Library has fortunately had some librarians distinguished for both: the names of Charles Coffin Jewett, Justin Winsor, and Herbert Putnam are writ large in library history. Trustees and librarians alike may profit from the story told in detail of the construction, without regard to function, of the great architectural monument that is the present library in Copley Square, and the more significant story of attempts to rebuild the interior into the useful and complicated service areas demanded in a modern public library. Anyone who has watched the ingenious changes taking place under the present capable director, Milton E. Lord, will better appreciate the extraordinary complexity of the problems created by the necessity of defrosting architectural icebergs. Branch libraries, bookmobiles, the dual emphasis upon research facilities and services to the reading needs of the general public have their proper parts, as has, too, quite fortunately, the dispute over Macmonnies' sculpture "Bachante." If the reader does not turn from the few pages about the "Naked Drunken Woman" in this book to the author's longer account in the *New England Quarterly* for December, 1954, he will have missed one of the best stories in library history.

In a note Mr. Whitehill commends David McCord's centennial pamphlet as "full of information and free from the pompous solemnity that affects many commemorative publications of institutions." One can do no better than use the same words to describe Mr. Whitehill's own book. To this should be added a tribute to Rudolph Ruzicka, whose fine illustrations and expertness in book design give the volume a deserved distinction.—*Robert E. Moody, Boston University Libraries.*

Medical Library Practice

Handbook of Medical Library Practice, with a Bibliography of the Reference Works and Histories in Medicine and the

Allied Sciences. 2d ed., rev. and enl. Janet Doe, Mary Louise Marshall, editors. Chicago: American Library Association, 1956. 601 p. \$10.

When the first edition of this *Handbook* appeared in 1943 it was described as "a manual of procedure and a reservoir of useful data." Emphasis was placed on the latter aspect, with happy results; and happily this revised and enlarged second edition has continued this emphasis. A very wide range of information is included: organization charts; salary scales; factors for calculation of stack capacities; names and addresses of book and periodical dealers; directions for using mending glues; samples of various classification schemes now prevalent; lists of subject heading aids; manufacturers of map cases, display equipment, and microfilm reading machines; checklists for a public relations program; and data on medical library resources, medical library education, and the Medical Library Association. There is something here for everyone. All of it will be of daily usefulness to the younger librarian, and to the librarian of the "one-man" library, while even the most sophisticated and experienced librarian must find in it an invaluable source of occasional help.

The last half of the book deals with reference and bibliographic service applicable to clinical medicine and medical research, and to a discussion of rare books and the history of medicine, both sections being capped with a really magnificent annotated "Bibliography of the Reference Works and Histories in Medicine and the Allied Sciences" numbering almost 2,000 entries. This bibliography was the outstanding feature of the first edition. It is here revised, augmented (the number of entries has doubled), and rearranged. Formerly the bibliography was arranged primarily by form of publication; in the second edition it is arranged basically by subject, and only secondarily by form. Finally, this book has what might be called an indexer's index, the kind which every librarian admires but finds all too infrequently.

This edition appears as its co-editor, Janet Doe, who edited the first edition, retires following a distinguished career at the New