

cliques—cultivated orchids in a literary greenhouse. They believe in the mystique of the book and the inspired genius of the author. Preferring to look back to the golden age of publishing from World War I to the 1950s, they view the radical cultural and economic changes of the present and future with abhorrence. While all this is changing, the image is persistent.

The modern publisher, on the other hand, stems from a much wider social background, works for a large firm, generally the result of mergers, and has sacrificed most of his autonomy to technical efficiency and the profit motive. The publishing decision is based less on the quality of the book than on the probable quantity of sales. At its most Orwellian, the book becomes indistinguishable from a bar of soap, and the author is paid to write the books needed to balance the list.

There is, of course, nothing new in all of this. The situation is much the same in this country, and librarians and teachers of publishing courses in library schools have long been concerned over these trends. The difference between this book and the typical book on publishing is mainly that this book is written by a sociologist rather than a publisher. The author is currently writing a book on British culture since 1930, and as publishing is an important gateway for the culture available to the public, he is greatly involved with this topic.

One of the problems of a book in sociology is the sometimes curiously circumlocutory prose style, which makes the uninitiated reader feel like a UN interpreter simultaneously translating the printed page into standard English usage. Regrettably, examples of this style are by their very nature too long to include here, but the style makes the brief, 129-page text seem much longer. Another stylistic peculiarity is the use of the feminine wherever the text requires the use of the impersonal pronouns "he, his, him." The author uses "she, her" as if sexism were all right in reverse.

Nevertheless the book presents a thoughtful and worthwhile study by a concerned and informed researcher. The author concludes that "the picture of modern publishing is grim" (p.128) and indeed "British publishing is gravely ill" (p.128). Traditional

publishers wallow like dinosaurs in the sloughs of their own inadequacies, while their modern gotta-sell-soap successors have shortcomings equally grave. As the author offers no alternatives, the book should be an excellent springboard to discussions of the problem by sociologists, librarians, and publishers as to the future of book publishing. By the same token it should be of value to libraries serving the same groups.—*Budd L. Gambee, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*

Stokes, Roy. *Michael Sadleir, 1888–1957*. The Great Bibliographer Series, no.5. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1980. 154p. \$8.50. LC 80-11419. ISBN 0-8108-1292-4.

Books are tools that mediate our experience with reality. For example, reading books on the history of our profession may effectively balance the narrowness of our day-to-day scrutiny of library operations. In this instance, we have the opportunity to understand the role Michael Sadleir, best known as Trollope's bibliographer, played in influencing the direction of descriptive and analytical bibliography.

Following a format similar to the earlier four titles in this series, Roy Stokes, director of the School of Librarianship at the University of British Columbia, introduces Sadleir by way of some pithy biographical information and then fifteen excerpts from Sadleir's own writing, each with a thoughtful but brief preface setting the context. One gets the feeling that Stokes truly admires his biographee and we should, too, for he opened the door to and legitimized the bibliographical study of the nineteenth century, particularly its popular inexpensive fiction. Several of the excerpts also reflect Sadleir's early but strong interest in writing his own novels of Victorian low-life, perhaps his best being *Fanny by Gaslight* (1940). Other excerpts are from his scholarly contributions—such pioneering works as *Excursions in Victorian Bibliography* (1922) and *XIX Century Fiction* (1951), as well as his investigations into publishers' bindings. These have earned him the appellation "great."

Readers interested in delving further into Sadleir will benefit from the last section, a chronological checklist of his work. More

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than 225 entries appear, beginning in 1907 and ending in 1962 with two posthumous works. Those wishing to confront him more directly might enjoy examining his personal collection of nineteenth-century fiction, purchased by UCLA's Regents in 1951. A typical initial reaction is to marvel at the matchless condition of his 10,000 volumes, mostly three-deckers; following a deeper investigation one begins to comprehend the amazing completeness, especially the many minor women authors. The late Professor Bradford A. Booth was right about Sadleir's "matchless knowledge and tireless perseverance."

Finally, the development of this particular series should be followed, noting who else will be honored for their contributions. In a way these individuals reaffirm our own ability to shape and guide the destiny of our profession. We would all benefit if our historians adopted as their motto: "Our future is the past in service of the present."—*John Richardson, Jr., University of California, Los Angeles.*

Annual Report of the American Rare, Antiquarian and Out-of-Print Book Trade, 1978/1979. Edited by Denis Carbonneau. New York: BCAR Publications, 1979. 233p. \$15.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper (plus \$1 postage and handling). ISBN 0-930986-02-4 cloth; 0-930986-03-2 paper.

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