

SUBSCRIPTION BOOKS.—It is seldom necessary or advisable for small libraries to purchase subscription books from agents. Books are sold in this way generally for one of two reasons: (1) Their great expense, (2) Their inferiority. Expensive subscription books may be of great value; but these are seldom offered to the small library with the exception of large works of reference (Cyclopedias, etc.) issued by responsible firms. It is not often necessary to buy these of agents; they may almost always be picked up of second-hand dealers, in perfect condition, at half price or less. Many who do not really want them are prevailed upon to purchase by the persuasive agent and hasten to "unload" at a loss. This is the library's opportunity. The subscription books classed above as "inferior" include (a) Collective biographies made to sell to those whose portraits or sketches are included. (Sometimes even these books may be locally valuable.) (b) Standard or good works showily bound and offered as editions-de-luxe; (c) Complete books, available in other forms, combined in various ways into "sets" with introductions by well-known writers or with the name of some noted man as editor; (d) Cheap reprints of old works of reference falsely said to be "revised" or "brought down to date"; (e) Worthless books of kinds too numerous to mention, sold through agents in the confidence that a considerable proportion of the public is gullible.

Small libraries may well make it a rule to buy nothing through subscription agents. This may occasionally deprive the librarian of a chance to see something of value. At any rate: (1) Agree to buy nothing while in the agent's presence; (2) Sign no agreement that you do not thoroughly understand; (3) Judge of no work by a few "Specimen pages"; (4) If there is no hurry try the second-hand dealers first.

Publishers of reference-works generally cut the plates every year or so to insert new matter. This may be of little relative importance. Agents urge the purchase of the "new editions", and the old ones (in such cases nearly as good) are thrown on the second-hand market at astonishingly low prices. The difference between an "edition" of 1907 and one of 1897, at one-third the former's price, may be merely a little information on radium and wireless telegraphy, that you may cover as well with magazine articles. On the other hand, a new edition may be a comprehensive revision making the older ones worthless. But do not trust the agent's representations. Find out for yourself.

LIBRARIES AS BOOK BUYERS.—The last annual reports of the municipal public libraries in the following cities show that they spent in one year the sum of \$522,021.63 in the purchase of books:

New York (Manhattan, Bronx and Richmond), Brooklyn, Queens Borough, Chicago, Ill., Philadelphia, Pa., St. Louis, Mo., Boston, Mass., Baltimore, Md., Cleveland, O., Buffalo, N. Y., San Francisco, Cal., Cincinnati, O.,	Pittsburg, Pa., Detroit, Mich., Milwaukee, Wis., Washington, D. C., Newark, N. J., Jersey City, N. J., Minneapolis, Minn., Providence, R. I., Kansas City, Mo., Worcester, Mass., New Haven, Conn., Los Angeles, Cal., Somerville, Mass.
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When we consider that this list does not include the Library of Congress, or State Libraries, or the great number of smaller municipal libraries, or public school libraries, or subscription libraries throughout the country, it seems evident that the amount spent for the purchase of books by public libraries in any one year must amount to several times this total, at least five or six million dollars. The mere statement of this fact shows how important the public libraries are, as customers of the book sellers and as patrons of the publishers.

It is frequently difficult for libraries to know where to obtain the annual reports of societies and their occasional publications. Thus, unless one were apprised of the fact, he would hardly think of writing to Winona, Minn., for the reports of the National Educational Association. Usually the reports of societies are not easily obtained through the book trade, and it is necessary to apply at the office of the secretary of the society. In many cases, if it is found difficult to obtain publications of any society, the best course to pursue is either to ask the Library of Congress or a leading library of the state in which the society is known to have its headquarters, for the exact address of the publication agency of the society.

BOOKS THAT ARE NEEDED.—The following "Books that Ought to be Written" have been suggested. If libraries that can use one or more of them will inform us how many copies they would be likely to order, we will take the matter up with publishers. The number of copies needed may be written opposite title on this card:

Simple, profusely illustrated and small books for very young people.

Art of portrait-painting.

Domestic science; actual experiences.

How to speak good English.

Artistic house-furnishing for moderate incomes.

Social and Business forms, up-to-date.

Cut glass.

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Readable State and Local histories (e. g. "State of Missouri" pub. for St. Louis exposition).

Biographies of early Americans (e. g. Samuel Chase; John Rutledge; Chancellor Wythe).

U. S. History and civics in foreign languages.

Travels for children, arranged geographically (Something between Carpenter's readers and the "Zig-Zags," etc.).

Christmas ("a whole Christmas library is needed"—Customs, entertainments, poems, and stories, dinners, decorations, sermons and ethics, gifts).

Other holidays treated similarly, especially Thanksgiving and Hallowe'en.

Costumes, for fancy dress (pictures).

Collected plays from recent magazines.

History, scope, etc., of American-English periodicals.

THE BRITISH WORM TURNS.—"At a meeting of (English) public librarians and representatives of local authorities held at 20 Hanover Square, on February 27, resolutions were carried to the effect that a committee from the meeting should approach the Publishers' Association on questions affecting the net book system; in plain English, to demand that publishers should allow public libraries discount on net books. If the reply of the Publishers' Association is unsatisfactory, the committee is 'to prepare and submit some scheme of co-operation among public libraries.'" *Publishers' Circular*, March 2. The *Circular* charges that this is an attempt of the *Times* Book Club "to put British librarians against British publishers," and it predicts failure, saying that favors should not be asked with threats and that no arrangement involving discount can possibly be made without the consent of the Booksellers' Association. British libraries are now allowed no discount at all on net books.

The Salem Public Library reports the following out-of-print books as in demand. (Some, not o. p., are to be had only in very poor editions.) Write number of copies opposite titles you could use and return this card to the Committee:

- Abbott, Jacob, Jonas books.
" " Juno stories.
" " Lucy books.
" " Rollo's tour in Europe.
Auerbach, Little barefoot.
Black, A., Miss Jerry.
Boulger, Maid Ellice.
Butt, Eugene.
Cadell, Ida Craven.
Carleton, Black prophet.
" Clarionet.
Chaney, F. Grant & Co.
" Tom.
Dumas, Ingenue.
Gerard, Lot 13.
Grant, J., Jack Manly.

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Grant, J. Secret dispatch.
 Harrison, Daughter of the South.
 Hellis, Where brook and river meet.
 Hillern, On the cross.
 Hinkson, Dear Irish girl.
 Jephson, With the colors.
 Kavanagh, Madeleine.
 " Two lilies.
 Lawless, Millionaire's cousin.
 Macdonald, Dealings with the fairies.
 McKeen, Theodora.
 Macquoid, Patty.
 Moiesworth, Leona.
 Mulholland, Kathleen Mavourneen.
 Norris, Baffled conspirators.
 Oliphant, L., Irene Macgillicuddy.
 Payn, Beggar on horseback.
 Peard, Country cousin.
 Porter, Allan Dare and Robert le Diable.
 " Arthur Merton.
 Prentiss, Little Susy books. 3v. or 3 in 1.
 Ray, Cadets of Fleming Hall.
 " Margaret Davis, tutor.
 Reid, Mayne, Woodrangers.
 " Young Voyagers.
 Rohlf, Matter of millions.
 Simons, Aimwell stories, 7v.
 Stables, Jungle, peak and plain.
 Stannard, Driver Dallas.
 " I married a wife.
 Trafton, His inheritance.
 Yonge, Countess Kate.

ENGLISH AND AMERICAN PRICES CONTRASTED.

Bosanquet, Helen. The Family.	Macmillan.	\$2.75	8/6
Leonard, A. G. The Lower Niger.	Macmillan.	4.00	12/6
Vincent, Jas. E. Highways and Byways in Berkshire.	Macmillan	2.00	6/-
Westcott, B. F. Village Sermons.		1.75	6/-

In Book-Buyer for March, p. 42, is a list of English Publications that may now be secured from Scribner at lower rates than by direct importation.

CAUTION TO BUYERS AT AUCTION.—It is reported that certain auctioneers, in case of mail-orders giving limits of bids, habitually start the bidding at the higher limit also that some start with a fictitious bid at a higher figure. Some bid in books for themselves and sell them to mail customers at an advanced price. These things may or may not be true; but it is well to be on guard. Select a thoroughly reputable auctioneer and trust him. Attend a few auctions yourself, if possible, and watch methods. Some prefer to commission a reliable dealer to bid for them.

Address inquiries and suggestions to any of the Committee. Arthur E. Bostwick, Chairman, N. Y. P. L., 209 W. 23; John Cotton Dana, Newark (N. J.) F. P. L.; Bernard C. Steiner, Enoch Pratt F. L., Baltimore, Md.