reveal the rich resources available for the study of writers, books, and trade in the eighteenth century. This miscellany is indeed a fitting tribute to the work of William B. Todd.

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Barbara Kaye (Mrs. Percy Muir). *Second Impresson: Rural Life with a Rare Bookman*. New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press & Werner Shaw, 1995. 350 pp.; \$35.00 U.S. (cloth). ISBN 1-884718-04-3.

This work of Barbara Kaye is the third of a trilogy relating to bookselling and, more specifically, to the bookselling career of Percy Muir, late eminent British bookdealer and the author's husband. The first work, written by Muir himself and entitled *Minding My Own Business*, was originally published in 1956, and reissued a few years back with a new foreword by Kaye. Muir had been with the bookselling firm of Elkin Matthew since 1930, and this first work tells of that firm's experiences through two world wars and a depression. The second work, written by Kaye and entitled *The Company We Kept*, describes the Muirs' move to the country, the subsequent onslaught of the First World War, and the effect on Percy's business, as well as on their family life. It is a somewhat more personal view than is Muir's work.

In this third book of reminiscences, Kaye carries on the story from the viewpoint of being Muir's wife and the mother of two children. These were the years (1945-55) following the Second World War, when national associations of booksellers were trying to come to some consensus as to how best form a union for their mutual benefit. As one who presently sits on the Committee of the International League of International Booksellers (ILAB), it was of particular interest to this reviewer to read of the League's formation, and of the various individuals who played an intrinsic role in its birth. Percy Muir was one of these people and, because of his reputation for fairness and diplomacy, became president of the ILAB in 1950, and subsequently Life President of Honour.

His position of importance necessitated a great deal of travelling, and Kaye tried to accompany him on his trips as often as she could, despite the problems of two small children. Of these trips there are many interesting vignettes and some quite amusing anecdotes. At a National Book League reception, Kaye begins a conversation with a children's book writer she is convinced is Arthur Ransome. Kaye's questions fall flat but she presses on ignoring hints about her misconception. When a friend arrives on the scene, she exclaims: 'John, do you know Arthur Ransome?' 'I expect he does,' the man she had been speaking to said, 'but my name happens to be Milne' (p. 41).

There is a lengthy, interesting chapter on their first trip to the United States in 1951, where Muir was to do a lecture tour. Kaye's impressions of America,

following so closely upon the restrictions of wartime and post-war England, are entertaining, whether it be the potent, ubiquitous American dry martini, the portions of beef, or the lights of Broadway. It is interesting also to reflect on the mores of the 1950s. Whenever Muir had a commitment which entailed his wife's presence, Kaye dropped whatever it was that she was involved in — her own writing, the political work in which she was locally active, the children — and proceeded to be Percy Muir's wife. This period is pithily described in the book: 'Percy had never been an early riser. He saw no point in getting up and going downstairs to sort out his mail when he could have it brought to him in bed by his wife, who had to get up first anyway to see the children off to school (not the job of a man born in Queen Victoria's time) and feed her hens' (p. 241).

It is, however, the serious aspects of the book that are of significant import. Percy Muir's efforts in bringing about the abolition of the notorious auction 'Ring' that had operated for years renewed the public's confidence in the book trade as a whole. Even more interesting to this reader were the politics involved in the formation of the ILAB, the necessity of each country's giving up some autonomy for the benefit of international harmony, the problems Muir had within the British Association (ABA) in accepting the concept, and the question of how to handle the associations of countries who were on 'the wrong side' in the Second World War. That all of this, plus a constitution, plans for a membership director and a multi-language dictionary, were thought out, worked out, and brought into being was due to the likes of Percy Muir and his colleagues from other countries. Ten countries were represented at the first ILAB conference. This number has since doubled.

The only unfortunate and unnecessary problem with this work is the sloppy editing. 'André drove Percy and I . . .' and 'the British delegation . . . were' are some of the more egregious errors; even worse is the misspelling of so many foreign words: 'dictionaire,' 'nous avon,' 'anschluss,' and 'librarie.' It is a pity that more care was not taken, for the lack of editorial supervision detracts from this otherwise very engaging book.

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David Pearson. *Provenance Research in Book History: A Handbook*. London: The British Library, 1994. x, 326 pp.; \$100.00. ISBN 0-7123-0318-9.

David Pearson's 1987 provenance indices, precursors of this book, are, revised and augmented, at its core in Chapter VII. The surrounding chapters are an additional reference guide to finding out about provenance — the previous ownership of books — from inscriptions, bookplates, binding stamps, sale catalogues, and other secondary sources. The emphasis is on research — how to find out what various