

### THE SEMICENTENNIAL VOLUMES

*A Semicentennial History of the American Mathematical Society, 1888-1938.* By Raymond Clare Archibald. (American Mathematical Society Semicentennial Publications, vol. 1.) New York, American Mathematical Society, 1938. 12+262 pp.

Professor Archibald's book is in large part a compendium of facts about the American Mathematical Society and its officers. It is more a reference book than the story of the Society. The latter aspect is presented by his lecture published elsewhere in this Bulletin. Biographies and bibliographies of the presidents and secretaries fill one hundred forty-six pages of the two hundred sixty-two total. There are pictures of the presidents, the secretaries, and one of the librarians. To the reviewer it is this portion of the book which is most interesting and most valued. Almost every American mathematician has fallen at some time directly under the influence of one or more of our presidents; and their pictures, the brief facts of their lives with the record of their publications, will be prized by each of us. Indeed, to anyone who has been an attendant at many meetings all the more recent officers are friends, and we are indebted to Professor Archibald for this record of them. The bibliographies will be especially useful. Scripta Mathematica has published lists of the writings of some of the younger mathematicians. Taken jointly with the present bibliographies, these give us an interesting and useful index to an important part of American mathematical literature.

The first ninety-eight pages of the book are as follows. Twenty pages at the beginning can be described as the story of the Society. This story is not unlike the lecture which Professor Archibald delivered in New York. There are more details, the arrangement is different, and some things in the New York lecture are located in other portions of the volume. There are twenty-one pages in the chapter headed Financial Affairs, Special Funds. How important finances have ever been! Publication is a major function of the Society and an expensive one. It is well to appreciate the disinterested service of those who have struggled with this problem. There are in this chapter, too, detailed figures for those who want to understand our finances in some detail. Chapters follow on The Bulletin, The Transactions, The Colloquium Lectures and Publications, The Chicago Group, Annual Meetings, Summer Meetings, The Josiah Willard Gibbs Lectureship, The Library. In this last chapter there is a picture of David Eugene Smith. It is to be regretted that there is not also a picture of the present librarian.

The volume as a whole is an interesting account of stirring achievement. As a compendium of facts it will undoubtedly be widely used; as an album of American mathematicians it will be treasured.

TOMLINSON FORT

*Semicentennial Addresses.* (American Mathematical Society Semicentennial Publications, vol. 2.) New York, American Mathematical Society, 1938. 6+315 pp.

The addresses contained in this volume were written, for the most part, for oral delivery at the recent Semicentennial Celebration of the Society. Taken out of the surroundings in which they were intended to function they have the character of photographs which, although deprived of the colors of the original, give nevertheless important and useful information concerning the scenes they depict. A detailed and