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The Culture of the Publisher’s Series, Volume Two
Nationalisms and the National Canon

Edited, and with an introduction by John Spiers
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For my dear granddaughters Alina and Jodie
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In editing these two volumes concerned with the complex relationships between knowledge and culture, the market and the historical individual reader I have contracted many debts. Notably, to my splendid colleagues, the contributors. These offer chapters that range very widely in time and place. There is much significant new material about national and international cultures and the role of the series. These studies help us to understand publishing as a commercial, risk-taking, competitive, practical and entrepreneurial enterprise, as well as appreciating publishing as a fundamental cultural venture that poses the largest of all social and economic questions about meanings and events in different nations, regions and times. In my separate Introductions to each volume I have highlighted some problems of the historiographical analysis of events, and the economic and cultural work done by series, together with the wider cultural implications of this work. As Clifford Dyment wrote in 1943, ‘Collective urgency thinks only of action; poets, however, are always wondering about causes.’

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