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The Private Library
Quarterly Journal of the Private Libraries Association
Hon. Editor: Philip Ward, 28 Parkfield Crescent, North Harrow, Middlesex
Vol. 3 No. 4 October 1960

Association Affairs
Forthcoming Publications
Early in 1961 the Association will publish "The Grey of Howick Papers", an introductory survey of an important source for nineteenth-century history, by Ronald P. Doig, Ph.D. Mr Doig is Librarian of Hatfield College in the University of Durham and is an authority on George Paton, the book collector, on whom he has written in these columns.

The second annual volume of "Private Press Books" will be printed for the Association at the Signet Press, and should be ready in March. The price is slightly higher to meet higher printing costs. Later in the year the first retrospective volume of "Private Press Books" will be published, and the Editors will appreciate notes on books privately printed between 1950 and 1958.

The Private Library
The present issue of this journal prints specialist articles on several aspects of the book, including a new contribution from our French correspondent, J. Rives Childs, Mark Longman’s discussion of factors affecting the published price of a book, an article by Alan Walbank on bookshops in Dublin, and T. Hope Floyd’s article on his private library in Lancashire.

Introducing our supplement, A pictorial diagram of papermaking, H. R. Martin describes modern methods of making paper.

Binding At Home
The Honorary Secretary would be pleased to hear from any member who has bound his own books at home, or has had experience in bookbinding. Experts on book-repairing are also wanted to assist other members with advice and practical assistance.

October 1960
COLLECTING HENRY MILLER: OR, WHAT MILLER MEANS TO ME

by J. Rives Childs

HENRY MILLER, the despised and rejected, seems at last to be coming into his own. In the December number of Two Cities, Karl Shapiro calls him the greatest of living writers. As such an evaluation implies a knowledge of world literature which few of us possess I would be less categorical. I have long claimed that he is the greatest of living American authors and it was immensely gratifying to me when Lawrence Durrell, a far more competent critic than I, recently voiced such an opinion.

Few writers have been more misunderstood than Miller. In 1947 when M. Thiebaut, the eminent editor of the Revue de Paris, wrote slightingly of Miller, I took issue with him. As my letter offers a summary of views I still hold I quote it in part:

"It has been particularly interesting to me to find in your study of recent trends in American literature the linking of the names of Restif de la Bretonne and Henry Miller. Unfortunately you do not pursue the comparison... Henry Miller, of course, is a lineal descendant of Restif in the family of literature; their origins, careers and literary output offer interesting affinities, a study of which, it is hoped, will some day be undertaken. Both men were born into a world in a profound state of political, social and economic upheaval; both found themselves early in a state of rebellion against the societies in which they were born. Both beat their wings against what they regarded as the insanities of the times.

A gross injustice is done in my opinion in attributing a pornographic purpose to the work of either of these writers.

I look upon the licence of language used by Restif and Miller as a means chosen by them to express their profound dissatisfaction with the world about them. Far from pornographic, their language is to be regarded as a means used by them to shock an insensible world into an awareness of the insane organization of society. Both Restif and Miller are profoundly humanitarian. The world to them appears a madhouse; to attract the attention of the inmates one must shock them. That at any rate is how I read Restif and Miller. To state that "dans le championnat international de la pornographie, il est certain que Miller se classe bon premier" is to reveal a complete misconception of Miller. It is as unfair to judge Miller on the basis of certain passages in certain of his works as to form a judgment of Restif on the basis of Anti-Justine.

You also fail, it seems, to understand the irony of Miller, an irony in the great tradition of Swift. When Swift proposed as a means of relieving the distress in Ireland to offer 100,000 Irish children for human consumption many of his contemporaries took him seriously. Similarly you appear to have taken seriously Miller's injunction, "'Hommes, achetez un fusil et muez-vous l'autre.' Surint ne travaillez pas.

'Il faut mieux tuer les autres que gagner sa vie.'"

What Miller is doing here is to sum up what he considers to be the prevailing spirit of the times. There is doubtless also the thought in the back of his mind that, considering the present state of the world, mankind would do well to make a good job of killing each other. To infer, however, that this is his philosophy of life is as wide of the mark as to ascribe the acceptance of cannibalism to Swift.

I thought Miller might be interested in my letter and I sent him a copy, thus initiating a correspondence which has continued to this day. In his reply he referred me to his Obscenity and the Law of Reflection as representing the best summary of his views on the so-called pornography in his work. He was particularly impressed by the affinities I had drawn between Restif and himself and asked me to send him something of that author's work. The next time I went to Paris I picked up a one-volume modern edition of the Nuits de Paris which I sent him. When he published Books I Have Read he made passing reference to Restif as well as to me as 'an American attaché in Jaffa.' I enjoyed one of the heartiest laughs I had had in weeks; it happened that I was, in fact, American Ambassador to Saudi Arabia but I had kept it carefully concealed from Miller. With the knowledge I had gained of him I feared that once he found out the character of my position it might put a damper on our correspondence. Later in his Big Sur he devoted several pages to our correspondence and to Restif. By that time I was identified as 'American Minister'. Happily it never altered our relationship.

I had discovered Miller as early as 1939 through one of the happiest chance encounters in all my book-collecting experiences. It came about through my falling upon an exceptionally intelligent British clerk in Bretonnais' in Paris. It was late in August and Europe was teetering on the edge of war. I was bound for Morocco and had to catch a train to Marseilles. In the taxi I recollected, to my dismay, that I had no books to beguile my journey. Directing the driver to stop at Bretonnais, I rushed into that bookshop. 'I want something in the style of James Joyce,' I said, 'and I have to have it in a hurry.' Without any hesitation my guardian angel, in the person of this anonymous clerk, reached for the stacks and handed me: Miller's Tropic of Cancer, Black Spring and Max, together with Lawrence Durrell's Black Book. I had never heard of either writer and few others had; indeed I am constantly meeting Americans today who stare blankly when I mention Miller.

I had only to read a few pages of Miller to be convinced that here was a bold new spirit, venturing to speak his mind in defiance of the cant of our century. I must confess that Durrell impressed me less although I have since come to modify my opinion of him after reading Justine and Balthazar. I was examining Durrell's Black Book the other day and found it to have been a first. So also was Miller's Black Spring and Max. The lot probably cost me less than a pound. As soon as I got back to New York in September I began picking up all the Millers I could find. They included his Misseslance, published by Bern Porter, Miller's Africa, and a first American promotion of his work. Mine was a postcard to Bern Porter:

Bern: I hope you at least made an exception in Schmelley's case and sent him a free copy of Semblance! The fact that he can order copies from you proves nothing. You seem to regard a friend as one who does something for you. Wouldn't it be better to look upon him first and foremost as one to whom you do something for? Henry Miller.

Nothing could be more characteristic of Miller than the thought expressed in his postcard.
in this card. Alfred Perlès, in his superb biography of Miller, was a thousand times right when he described him as 'a genuine saint.' This must have perplexed a great many people but it is a thoroughly sound appreciation. Miller's sainthood is one of his titles to fame; it may be that he is the only genuine saint to be found in the United States. In case you are incredulous read his A Devil in Paradise.

Some will object, 'but what about his pornography?' In Edwin Corle's masterly introduction to Miller's The Smile at the Foot of the Ladder, Corle properly remarks that any obscenity to be found in the Tropics and in one or two other works of Miller, is a reflection of the obscenity in the minds of Miller's readers rather than in Miller's own. I agree wholeheartedly with Corle that Miller 'is a thoroughly respectable writer.' I have been reading the classics of world literature since my childhood; there are but two other writers comparable to him in the sense he gives of absolute genuineness: Shakespeare and Chekhov. One finds it also in Casanova but perhaps not as consistently.

It is a bitter commentary on the state of the world that the United States, which permits the diffusion of comic books which traduce all that is noble in man, and permits the export of certain moving pictures which are a disgrace both to the United States and to humanity, should still ban some of Miller's works. When I was Ambassador to Ethiopia and was appealed to by certain American motion picture interests to induce that government to lift the ban on gangster films I called on the authorities, showed them the letter and remarked: 'I have come not to ask you to lift the ban but to congratulate you on its maintenance.' As a result of the American official attitude towards Miller the tendency has been to give foreigners not acquainted with his work a false and distorted opinion of him. Some time ago I invited a group of French and other residents in Nice, interested in literature, to a symposium on Miller. Most of them came to scoff. I read for the particular benefit of my French guests that moving tribute to France in the Air-Conditioned Nightmare, recounting Miller's visit to Sarlat and his reflections on France in that country's darkest hour after Miller's return to America. There was hardly a dry eye when I had finished. A French professor, author of many books, remarked, 'This is a revelation to me. I had no faintest notion of Miller's depth and power.' It is a pity but few do.

The Air-Conditioned Nightmare is one of my favourites. I especially cherish it not only for its tribute to France but also for his eloquent testimony regarding my other country, the South. Miller, a product of Brooklyn, has written in his chapter on 'The Southland' one of the keenest appreciations of the South ever written and that is saying a great deal. I am tempted to quote pages but I must limit myself to a few lines:

'The Southerner has a different rhythm, a different attitude towards life. Nothing will convince him that he was wrong; at bottom he has a supreme contempt for the men of the North. He has his own set of ideals—warriors, statesmen, men of letters—whose fame and glory no defeat has ever dimmed... This world of the South corresponds more nearly to the dream life which the poet imagines than do other sections of the country. Little by little this dream world is being penetrated and poisoned by the spirit of the North... Amidst the embers of the past the Southerner treated his defeats way. Compared to the men of the North he is a charming, gracious, courteous, dignified, civilized being... It is all over now. A new South is being born. The old South was ploughed under. But the ashes are still warm.

Only a Northerner of supreme sensitive perceptions, and one at the same time a poet, could have looked into the soul of the South and have written of it as Miller has done.

I am often asked what one should read of Miller. His Tropics should only be read by those who are looking in Miller for something other than dirt. His description of the telegraph company and its messengers in Capricorn rise to heights unsurpassed in American literature. 'Via Dieppe-Newhaven' in Max is to be commended particularly to British readers. It is hilariously amusing and yet, with most of Miller, there is an undertone of profound sadness. Read the Golem of Manassast and you will be tempted to take the first boat for Greece.

Don't expect to be instructed about that country but read it for what it reveals of Miller's intense spirituality. It is a paean in praise of the Greek spirit in which no obscene word or thought intrudes.

It was my singular good fortune to have discovered Miller at a comparatively early date. Assigned to Tangier in 1941 and anxious to obtain the Tropic of Capricorn I wrote to a bookstore in Paris on a hunch for a copy. When I received a first edition at a cost of a few shillings I ordered four more copies which were subsequently distributed to friends. I continued to pursue the collection of Miller's works unremittingly before he had become famous. After I had established communication with him in 1947 I enlisted his own co-operation in helping to supply me with what I lacked. During these last years he has been most faithful in sending me or having sent to me by his publishers a copy of each of his works they appear, most often with a dedication. I have been favoured also by friendly bookdealers: M. Bottin in Nice turned up for me not only a first edition of Hamlet but the rarest airline Booster Broadside No. 1, Money and How it Gets That Way. How it found its way to Nice will always be a mystery. In addition to a practically complete collection of Miller's works, I also have a few of his typescripts, as well as some bibliographical notes which he kindly sent me. I must have also forty or fifty letters from him, for the most part in longhand. I finally decided that it was too much of an imposition on his time to expect him to continue to write me and I wrote and adjured him to stop. When I was in Japan in 1956 I wrote him, stating that I would have a few hours in San Francisco on my arrival there, during which I might make him a hurried visit to Big Sur. His reply was quite characteristic. In substance it was: 'We have never met and we need more than a couple of hours together. Let's wait until we can have a meeting at leisure.' I replied and told him he could not have paid our friendship a compliment which meant more to me.

I have a fairly valuable collection of books. If were told I would have to leave my flat in a hurry and have to rely for the rest of my life on those books which I might contrive to take with me I would not hesitate. They would be my Everyman Shakespeare, thirteen pocket volumes of Chekhov's short stories, Casanova's Memoirs and as much of Miller as I could salvage. I could then face any disaster with equanimity.

October 1960
DUBLIN'S BOOKSHOPS

by Alan Walbank

My introduction to the second-hand bookshops of Dublin was somewhat tantalisingly affected by a second-rate film. Those of Belfast and of Londonderry I had already visited once, and once only, having neither urge nor occasion to enter again their too regimented or else rubbish-choked interiors. But the shadowy pursuit of an I.R.A. man or some equally desperate agent in 'Dublin Nightmare' quickly offset this disillusion about Irish bookshops. It led, for a few moments - while a bland shopkeeper nearly misunderstood his pursuer's questions - between the lofty bays of old calf and morocco, tables piled with folios, maps and prints, dim recesses of fine bindings and the impedimenta of mounted globes and glass cabinets, in a genuine old-style bookshop whose vicinity I noted from a fleeting glimpse of the Nelson Pillar in O'Connell Street. This was just the kind of shop I had missed in Northern Ireland. So, as soon as opportunity offered, it was 'over to Dublin'. Needless to say, in spite of the humour to store luggage for safe-keeping, and the impedimenta of whose placards someone had scrawled 'To his pursuer's questions between the lofty bays of old calf and morocco, tables piled with folios, maps and prints, dim recesses of fine bindings and the impedimenta of mounted globes and glass cabinets, in a genuine old-style bookshop whose vicinity I noted from a fleeting glimpse of the Nelson Pillar in O'Connell Street. This was just the kind of shop I had missed in Northern Ireland. So, as soon as opportunity offered, it was 'over to Dublin'.

The nearest thing to the famous booksellers' reach along the Seine embankment is the more modest, but delightful tree-shaded reach of quays along the Liffey, which has earned Dublin the title of 'poor man's Paris'. Here, after crossing O'Connell Bridge and passing the Fun Palace where it is the Irishman's humour to store luggage for safe-keeping, and the offices of an Irish press over whose placards someone had scrawled 'To keep it all ex-ports and politicians', I struck my first second-hand shop. The sign that warned me to it from the outset was one marked 'from a long, pavement shelf of books, another marked 6d on an even longer shelf and two packed window ledges with a mixture of old and new at 1/-'. Among these hors d'oeuvres were an eighteenth century prayer book in red morocco, Scott's Tales of a Grandfather in half calf with marbled end-papers, Piccadilly, that amusing Society satire of the '70s by Laurence Oliphant with Dicky Doyle's original illustrations, and one of the earliest publications in the Parlour Library in decorated boards. This latter, The Black Prophet by William Carleton, author of Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry, bore the imprint of the Belfast firm Simms and McIntyre who fathered that pioneer series of cheap fiction before it was taken over by Thomas Hodgson.

When I had tucked under my arm the first one-volume edition of Trollope's Miss Mackenzie (1866) with its distinctive double page engravings before the title, I turned into the shop. If not quite a match for the one anticipated by my film it was the next best thing. Two large and lofty rooms were stacked from floor to ceiling with poetry, topography, fiction, drama and the inevitable theology, while great tables of ephemera filled most of the floor space. There, while people hurried to work across the beautiful arch of Halfpenny Bridge and beneath its overhanging wrought iron lamps, one could browse in quiet content from calf to labelled boards and early cloth, then back to panelled calf. From the top of a ladder sampling a high shelf of 17th century pamphlets and sermons it seemed but a short leap into the world of Swift, Dean of St Patrick's. So it was especially pleasing to pick up the first complete collection of his poems, printed by and for George Faulkner, printer and bookseller, in Essex-street opposite to the Bridge, Dublin, 1660.

My next call along the quays recalled Stephen Dedalus' bookhunting along Bedford Row, by Merchants' Arch and Wellington Quay, as described in Ulysses. 'In Clohissey's window a faded 1860 print of Heenan boxing Sayers held his eye. Staring backers with square hats stood round the roped ring. The heavy weights in light loincloths proposed gently to each other his bulging fists...'. He turned and halted by the slanted bookcart. 'Twopenny each, the huckster said. Four for sixpence. Tattered pages. The Irish Beekeeper, Life and Miracles of the Cure of Ars. Pocket Guide to Killarney... What is this? Eighth and ninth book of Moses. Secret of all secrets. Seal of King David. Thumbed Pages. Read and read. Who has passed here before me?'

Doubtless James Joyce had and had seen the same type of shop as I now saw. Its window was cluttered with prints, political cartoons and coloured plates from old magazines together with faded portraits of Irish heroes of the troubles, Pearse and Plunkett, Connolly, Lynch and Collins. Inside there were more 'pin-ups', chiefly Edwardian beauties and boxers of the era of Jimmy Wilde or earlier days. I was groping round the shelves that lined the walls of this dimly lighted room and had just unearthed a nicely bound copy of Parnell's poems (not the Parnell of Gladstone's day, but the friend of Pope and Swift and author of A Night Piece on Death) when some instinct suddenly arrested my next step. It was just as well. Looking down a sheer ten or twelve feet I peered into a black cellar, probably close to the level of the Liffey. The trap-door which formed a part of the floor in this corner had been left flung back against the dark shelves... The shopman, of course, was profuse in his apologies, but for the omen's sake it seemed best to leave Parnell on the shelf.

Almost all bookshops in Dublin devote a special section to the Irish renaissance. A few yards further on a single window had more brilliant items of modern Irish literature than the city itself has painted saloons and corner bars. Yeats, AE, Moore, Stephens, Synge, Eglinton, Colum, Dunsany, Lady Gregory, Johnstone, Irvine, O'Casey, O'Flaherty, O'Faolain, O'Connor, Beckett, Behan - all were there, rare early works, autographed and collected editions, arranged as a sort of altar piece to Irish nationalism. The author of Dubliners and celebrant of Anna Livia Plurabelle had a subsidiary altar to himself composed of biographies, letters, memoirs and works of exegesis. There appeared the answer to Joyce's insistence on the necessity of getting Ireland back into Europe...

After strolling along the other banks of the Liffey, by Bachelor's Walk and the auction rooms and antique shops adjoining Capel Street, I steered course by a side alley to the hinterland of College Green. Midway up the alley...
yawning, frowsty semi-basement exploited the lower reaches of the book trade with greasy, ex-subscription library novels, stacks of old westerns and picture magazines, but without the covert display of strip-tease 'art' that only non-Catholic communities will tolerate. A hasty glance located one relic, at least, of popular, native tradition among so much rubbish. It was a cheap edition in pictorial boards of Charles Lever's novel A Day's Ride - A Life's Romance with a cream, red, and blue cover picture of a pair of Victorian lovers and disconsolate suitor, in which by the second chapter we are transported to National Library and in literature since 1800. Its price range descended decently from the explorer of the joys of discovery. The hint may be dropped however that from one I obtained an illustrated to five shillings for a wrappered William Allingham's for cups of tea at one of the Harcourt Street confectioners before going on a Whistler in house, adding to my own small bundle cloth and with Miss Somerville's inimitable illustrations, for of the lonely Grand Canal1.

High ceiling, were semi-circular bays of books. A staircase that branched out tier upon tier of shelves and tiers of books and with Miss Somerville's inimitable illustrations, for of the lonely Grand Canal1.

The last bookshop that I had time to visit was a post office - to use an Irishism. At any rate I went in, directed by the street sign, to buy stamps at the wire grille of the central counter. To each side of it, rising in packed rows to the high ceiling, were semi-circular bays of books. A staircase that branched out of the post office entrance was similarly flanked by tier upon tier of shelves and when I mounted it three upper rooms presented a massive accumulation, that seemed to have the dust of last century upon it. A closer look at the downstairs collection proved the supposition to be not far off the mark. Here indeed was the reading matter that a Victorian circulating library would have offered, much of it in original 'three-decker' state: The Love of Arden by M. E. Braddon, Bloom but Comely by Whyte Melville, The Woman in White, Uncle Silas by Sheridan le Fanu, Gregorinstein by Marion Crawford, Tomita by Justin McCarthy and a late work by Nathaniel Hawthorne Transformation, each in three green or brown or blue faded volumes.

No doubt there is more than one such collection in Dublin, but it might well have been from these very shelves that Joyce chose the titles for Molly Bloom's reading in her long final soliloquy. East Lynne, The Shadow of Ashby Magna, Henry Dunbar, Eugene Aram, The Moonstone and Molly Bawn - on account of the name I don't like books with a Molly in them like that one he brought me about the one from Flanders a whore always shoplifting anything she could.' Here they and their like seemed to have remained since such reading lost its savour. Upstairs, however, there was a Joycean trove of more permanent appeal - a many-shelved bay full of paper-backed French, German and Italian literature. One recalled that when he first began to earn small fees for reviewing, before going to Trieste, Joyce spent them on cheap editions of D'Annunzio and Sudermann, Maeterlinck and Verlaine, as well as on Turgenev and Tolstoy. Even now an assiduous searcher might bring to light one of the expatriate's copies, gathered by time among the rest of these second-hand paper-backed books.

No reader of Dubliners can fail to notice Joyce's special feeling for books of all kinds and his evocative use of their associations. There is almost a sensuous regard about it. In a dusty room of an uninhabited house at the blind end of North Richmond Street4, for example the narrator in Araby finds 'a few paper-covered books, the pages of which were curled and damp: The Abbot by Walter Scott, The Devout Communicant and The Memoirs of Vidocq (roman policier). I liked the last best because its leaves were yellow'. For me the bookshops of Dublin have just such an evocative effect - leading straight into the atmosphere of the 18th Century with its wide streets and columned porches, fine squares and Georgian mansions, or to the turn of the 19th and the shabbier, seedier but still spacious background of Ulysses.

As a bonne bouche, and witness that in Irish culture books are not the half of it, I pick up for sixpence a last one - a pocket collection of Irish songs dedicated to Samuel Lover under the title The Sprig of Shillelah, in case there should be singing on the boat home.

THE COST OF PUBLISHING

by Mark Longman

It is no exaggeration to say that success in managing a publishing business

about the one from Flanders a whore always shoplifting anything she could.' Here they and their like seemed to have remained since such reading lost its savour. Upstairs, however, there was a Joycean trove of more permanent appeal - a many-shelved bay full of paper-backed French, German and Italian literature. One recalled that when he first began to earn small fees for reviewing, before going to Trieste, Joyce spent them on cheap editions of D'Annunzio and Sudermann, Maeterlinck and Verlaine, as well as on Turgenev and Tolstoy. Even now an assiduous searcher might bring to light one of the expatriate's copies, gathered by time among the rest of these second-hand paper-backed books.

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THE COST OF PUBLISHING

by Mark Longman

Literary history affords many examples of authors firing broadsides at publishers - the story of Campbell, at a literary dinner, proposing the health of Napoleon because he once shot a publisher, has often been quoted as a fair expression of the feelings of writers - Byron's famous jibe 'how, Barabas was a publisher' dies hard, and even in our own day there is still a strong impression that in the publishing business there is little if any risk, and that profits are exorbitant.

Sir Stanley Unwin, in his classic textbook, The Truth About Publishing has said that the price of books and the economics of publishing are matters of such importance to the book reading public that it ought to be more widely known not only what are the chief factors controlling prices, but also the proportions in which these factors operate.

It is no exaggeration to say that success in managing a publishing business

No doubt there is more than one such collection in Dublin, but it might well have been from these very shelves that Joyce chose the titles for Molly Bloom's reading in her long final soliloquy. East Lynne, The Shadow of Ashby Magna, Henry Dunbar, Eugene Aram, The Moonstone and Molly Bawn - on account of the name I don't like books with a Molly in them like that one he brought me

Our Friend James Joyce: Padraic and Mary Colum.

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depends almost as much on pricing books correctly in relation to their costs as in the right choice of books which are published. Fortunes of a publisher can be quickly dissipated in extravagant and incompetent management of a production department.

Before we too easily accept the fashionable belief that books are too expensive let us look back to the years just before the First World War. The average new novel was published at 6/- and the cheapest classic was sold, cased bound, at 7d and Everyman Library at 1/-.

After 1918 production costs had risen on the average by 24 times. As we might expect, it was the cheapest book that suffered most, Everyman Library doubled its prices to 2/-, but the library novel only increased in price from 6/- to 7/6 and more expensive books by a similar percentage.

Costs remained fairly stable during the years between the two wars but, as the discount given to booksellers increased, the net amount received by publishers did not greatly exceed the 1914 figures.

We are all too familiar with the effects of inflation since 1939. Although the book trade won a notable battle with the Chancellor of the Exchequer over the threatened Purchase Tax on books in the early years of the last war, there has been a steady rise in both labour costs and materials. Both paper and printing costs have increased by about 34 times during the last 20 years, but it is difficult to give comparable prices for binding, because the rates vary according to the style and number of copies bound at any one time.

If, therefore, we take 100 as the 1914 index figure of production costs, it is clear that the comparable figure for 1939 is 225 and not less than 800 for 1960. Here again it is the cheapest books which have had to bear the largest increase because there is less scope for saving in production costs; for example, Penguins and kindred paperbacks have risen from 6d to 2/6 but the cased novel has on the average only doubled in price. Booksellers have pressed for higher discounts and it is now the general rule that books are bought by booksellers at one-third off the published price and sometimes at a higher discount.

It would be quite unrealistic to assume that philanthropic publishers have absorbed a very large proportion of these increased production costs and higher discounts in their desire to save the pockets of book-buyers.

What, then, is the reason for this discrepancy between costs and prices? There are, I think, three factors which we need to consider. First, there has been a significant increase in reading, a habit acquired by a new public during the war years and not yet lost. Before the war it was customary for first editions to lie within the range of 1,000 to 2,500 copies; now it is seldom possible to print less than 3,000 copies of a novel, or popular non-fiction, and it would perhaps be true to say that 5,000 is a more likely average. (Books of a specialized nature such as scientific textbooks, must be excepted from this broad generalization.)

We must remember that the cost of setting up the type, amounting to 20/ to 40/- per page, the making of blocks for illustrations etc., are fixed charges which do not vary with the number of copies printed. It follows that the cost per copy will decrease as the printing number increases.

Secondly, most publishers have made economies in the various production processes in an attempt to keep costs down. It is interesting to note in this respect that some Continental countries have sought to solve this problem on exactly opposite lines. They have justified even higher published prices by making their books more handsome and luxurious than before the war.

It is, of course, impossible to make a substantial saving in printing as 'labor' forms a very considerable element in these costs. A good publisher must however make an intelligent study of technical advances and new methods in printing which make for economy: the increasing use of lino-type setting, offset lithography for reprint work, rotary printing from plastic and rubber plates are examples.

Paper has given cause for anxiety in production costs in the last twenty years, fluctuating widely in price. As paper is bought by weight, the simplest method of economizing is to reduce the weight wherever possible and standardizing sizes for bulk buying.

The use of substitute materials for binding cloths has become common practice; indeed some of these materials are stronger than cheaper grades of cloth.

Thirdly there has been an additional source of income to publishers in subsidiary and paperback rights which were negligible in pre-war days.

Hereby producing for a wider market, by economies in manufacture and by income from subsidiary rights publishers have been able to keep book prices from rising as fast as they might otherwise have done.

As production outlay is such an important factor in publishing costs it has been thought desirable to consider the subject in some detail. We must now turn briefly to other items in publishing costs.

The system of payment to authors on a royalty basis is now almost universal: that is a percentage of the published price and not of the price received by the publisher from the bookseller. Most royalties range between 10% to 15%.

If a higher percentage is paid there is a very real danger that the price will be forced up to an uneconomic level, resulting in a diminishing return to the author. Although these percentages have not greatly varied from earlier days it is obvious that authors' earnings have increased in direct proportion to higher published prices and increased sales. The only charge against royalty earnings (not often extracted from authors) is that of excess corrections to proofs. The printer charges approximately 20/- per hour for making corrections, therefore every endeavour is made to prepare copy carefully before the manuscript is sent to the printer.

Finally we must consider distribution costs represented by the discount given by the publisher to the bookseller, a discount which must of course also ensure an adequate profit for the bookseller after due allowance has been made for the risk of bad stock. A minimum of 33 1/3% is now the general rule for those books which carry the greatest risk, such as novels and books on the publisher's general list, including biographies, travel, adventure and so on.
Books selling overseas carry a much higher discount, rising to 50% in order to cover carriage charges. These distribution costs may seem high but we are bound to take into account the very formidable risk which a bookseller undertakes when stocking this class of literature. Each year about 15,000 new books are published in the United Kingdom and probably more than half that number are highly speculative ventures for the booksellers (not to mention the publisher!).

A simple example will illustrate this point:

- 6 copies bought at 84 - 6 sold at 12/6: gross profit 25/-
- 6 " " 84 - 4 " 12/6: no profit;
- 6 " " 84 - 3 " 12/6: loss 12/6.

In fact few booksellers make a living out of selling books only; it is common knowledge that stationery and other goods have saved many booksellers from going out of business. This is hardly surprising when the average household spends 8d to 1/- per week on books, only a few pence more than on matches.

A summary is given below in tabular form of the cost of publishing some typical classes of books. It should be emphasised that there can only be averages and may not be true in any particular instance.

A sample survey was made a few years ago by some leading general publishers of new novels and popular non-fiction, giving percentages of the published price:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production costs</td>
<td>28.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overheads (including advertising)</td>
<td>17.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royalties</td>
<td>11.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookseller’s discount (home and overseas)</td>
<td>39.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher’s Net Profit</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures may paint too gloomy a picture but it is true that novels are the most speculative of all ventures, the margin of profit is extremely narrow, except for the elusive best sellers, and the price is, to all intents and purposes fixed by the commercial library and by the general public.

A reprint will, of course, show a more encouraging result, since setting costs and blockmaking have already been paid for.

_A book of Memoirs_ – 10,000 reprint – _Denny 8vo – 288 pages 21/– with illustrations_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overhead including Advertising</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royalty</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home and Overseas Bookseller</td>
<td>38.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher’s Net Profit</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From these examples it will be seen that a publisher who has a ‘back list’ of reprints is in a far more favourable position than the publisher of new novels and popular non-fiction which seldom reprint.

In common with all other businesses it may be said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will take his share of the profits, capital must be serviced in the form of dividends, and the balance ploughed back into the business to finance new publications.

It is well to appreciate that the basis of all publishing is judgment, based on specialized knowledge. Good judgment is essential not only in the selecting and editing of books but also in the economics of publishing. A faulty decision on a price or a printing number, or in the marketing of a book can quickly turn a profit into a loss.

**EVOLUTION OF A LIBRARY**

_by Thomas Hope Floyd_

_IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE_ of this journal the Editor observed that one member ‘wants information about his fellow-members’ collections, more than anything else – while another said that articles on other peoples’ collections are a complete bore to her.’ With apologies to the latter lady, I feel encouraged by perusal of the admirable article by Mr Adrian Coates about his books to venture upon a description of my own and how I came to accumulate them and, ultimately, to become completely obsessed by them!

Everything in the universe comes into existence by some process of evolution.

This library of mine is no exception to that rule. The first seed had, in fact, been sown when I was scarcely out of my cradle by the presentation to me on my first Christmas Day (1896) by a kindly aunt (who must have had an eye on my future educational development!) of a complete one-volume, and very large, edition of the _Works_ of William Shakespeare. That was in 1896. In 1958 that one-volume library in which I had not the slightest interest at the time has, step by step, expanded into 9,950 volumes and still increases day by day!

How did this come about?

_It certainly did not come about as any direct result of any early enthusiasm for Shakespeare. Such literary appreciation was somewhat delayed, though it did ultimately come; and the volume remains, amongst my books of reference, one of the venerated treasures of the collection._

_In my early days my one enthusiasm was for cricket, cricket to the exclusion of all other games: the only books I wanted to read, apart from _Swiss Family Robinson_ which I used to act in a game with such child friends as I had in early days, were books about cricket. Wisden’s _Cricketers’ Almanack_ took its place on my small shelf year by year and I knew all the records off by heart. Any other cricket books which I could obtain as presents joined them and were accumulated in my bedroom at Ashworth Vicarage and I revelled in the inspection of the fine cricket library which Dr H. H. I. Hitchon, of Lancashire_
County Cricket Club fame, our family doctor, had collected in his home at Rock House, Heywood. He was the captain of the Heywood Cricket Club where I spent all my Saturday afternoons and any other spare time I had with Ronald Taylor, the son of another Heywood doctor, who was my school-fellow and afterwards fell in action as a Major in the Indian Army in the Second World War.

But events moved in 1910 when I was listless and lonely (I was an only child living in a country Vicarage) for the only time in my life, not knowing what to do with myself as I could not go outside and play, something happened which changed the whole outlook of my life and opened out to me new worlds which are always endless and unattainable however long life may be prolonged! My father had purchased for me two historical novels and gave them to me to read at once. These memorable books were The Tower of London and Old Saint Paul's by William Harrison Ainsworth. Immediately I became enthralled. From that moment I had a new interest in history as a subject of curiosity and Ainsworth as an author. From that moment any tendency to a bat never quite deserted me, but the love of history in all its aspects, gradually took its place; this new enthusiasm never waned with it, step by step, came an interest in politics, which a famous historian has called 'present history', and, since I was a parson's son, ecclesiastical history and controversy - past and present - and, in fact, in all the aspects of life and theory with which the study of history deals.

At this period of my life I was at the Bury Grammar School but when my father, the late Rev. Thomas Earl Floyd, left Ashwood to become Vicar of Middleton Junction, I transferred to the Manchester Grammar School, the famous school at which Ainsworth himself had been educated a century earlier, the school which had just produced Stanley Houghton, who died while I was there, and which contained, amongst my contemporaries, Louis Golding and Gordon Hewart (the brilliant son of the future Lord Chief Justice) who fell gallantly in the First World War. At once I joined the Junior Debating Society where I made a number of friends who were nearly all as keen on history as I was and then proceeded to collect all the books I could on history and biography and politics and on all the various matters which we debated there every Friday afternoon after school. My school life centred on this Society just as my future Oxford life centred upon the Oxford Union of my proposers, Louis Golding and Gordon Hewart, the brilliant son of the future Lord Chief Justice, who fell gallantly in the First World War. At once I joined the Junior Debating Society where I made a number of friends who were nearly all as keen on history as I was and then proceeded to collect all the books I could on history and biography and politics and on all the various matters which we debated there every Friday afternoon after school. My school life centred on this Society just as my future Oxford life centred upon the Oxford Union of my proposers, Louis Golding and Gordon Hewart, the brilliant son of the future Lord Chief Justice, who fell gallantly in the First World War.

Broader and broader grew my mental horizon. I was collecting all the works of Ainsworth and reading them all. But fresh heroes began to occupy my attention. I became enthralled by the majestic oratory and prose of Lord Curzon and Winston Churchill at whose feet whenever they visited Manchester and collected and read everything by and about them and have kept up to date with all their works ever since. Amongst the great ones of the past Lord Macaulay, and his nephew Sir George Trevelyan, and Charles II and Samuel Pepys attracted me. I had my historical heroes and my historical villains. Amongst the latter Oliver Cromwell took the foremost place until a living public man, Stanley Baldwin, incurred my indignation!

Perusal of Morley's Life of Gladstone, Macaulay's History and Essays and Speeches, Trevelyan's Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, Winston Churchill's Life of Lord Randolph Churchill, and the Diary of Samuel Pepys and the writings of Dr Arthur Christopher Benson and his younger brother Robert Hugh Benson before breakfast and school in the early mornings set me on a venture which has become the main task of my life day by day. I started, on New Year's Day 1914, to keep a Diary and Scrap Book of personal doings and thoughts upon the events with my comments upon them.

Then came 1914. I followed the European Crisis with the utmost excitement, recording in my Diary my impressions day by day. A European War was an unheard-of wonder to the youth of 1914. We all wondered what it would be like. Here, to me, was history come to life with a vengeance! My father remarked that he supposed that in after years people would always speak of the times before 1914 and the times after it as of utterly different ages. How right he was! The world in which we live today, and have been living since 1914, is an entirely different one to that glorious epoch of Victoria and Edward VII. My school-days had been lived in what H. G. Wells called 'the glowing pause' of the reign of Edward VII.

From that moment my entire interest became concentrated on the problems of foreign affairs and defence with Churchill as my guide and Curzon not far behind! And with this interest my library grew in accompaniment. In June 1915 my thinking on these matters prompted me to write a letter which appeared in the local paper, the Middleton Guardian, on the subject of 'An International Parliament'. In this letter I pointed out that all previous attempts to prevent war by means of arbitration had proved ineffective through lack of power of enforcement; that balance of power amongst sovereign nations always ended in war, and that peace would never become secure until some sort of centralisation of power was brought about. 'The key of peace is power,' I said. Rome had once imposed peace by the concentration of power into her imperial hands. Peace could be attained thus by one power conquering the world. But this would not be pleasant for anybody except the conqueror. I suggested another and better way: the mutual agreement of all powers to surrender their sovereignty in international matters of dispute to a World Authority of impartial justice with an international police force at its disposal to enforce justice upon a disarmed world of self-governing nations. I hoped that when the peace conference assembled in 1919 this scheme would be agreed to, but upon the League of Nations was a futile mockery of my proposal and, and, naturally, failed as its successor the United Nations has failed for the same reason. I followed up this letter by others on the same theme in the Saturday Review and Goodwill and other journals during the later stages of the War and have been writing and speaking on this policy ever since. More and more public men are coming to see eye to eye with me on this matter as the years go by and the present Prime Minister has declared that he believes it to be the only ultimate way out. He said that in 1955, and most of his colleagues in the present Government believe it still. But public opinion, in this country and abroad, will have to be convinced before anything can be done. Thus the strategical problems of the war, and the problem of how to make it the last of wars, became my principal preoccupation both as a civilian and as...
a soldier. I was growing up rapidly and in due course joined up, later obtained my commission, and played my part in action on the Western Front with the glorious 55th (West Lancashire) Division in the Ypres Salient and at Givenchy finishing up on Armistice Day at 4th with Stockwell's Force.

And all the time I was reading and collecting books. On Euston Station one night when I was returning home on leave from the Front I bought Stisted Street by Compton Mackenzie. That marked another turning point in my outlook. I have always considered this to be the greatest of all novels. From that moment I longed to go to Oxford and experience life amongst its 'Dreaming Spires'. As soon as I was demobilised in the summer of 1919, after a pleasant spell with the Army of the Rhine, I wrote a book entitled At Ypres with Best-Dunkley which John Lane published in the summer of 1920 when I had already been at Oxford for nearly one year – the Oxford of Leslie Hore-Belisha and Beverley Nichols and Sir Anthony Eden and David Fyfe (Lord Kilmuir) and many other political and literary giants of today. Louis Golding and George Fasnacht and Kenneth Martin and Isidore Tenen and Herbert Baxter and many other old school contemporaries were all there with me too at their various colleges. So I had the time of my life. Out of my war gratuity I had purchased the Cambridge Modern History complete and the six large volumes of Monypenny and Buckle's Life of Disraeli; and, needless to say, I read Modern History and collected all the necessary, and many quite unnecessary, books on the subject and on all the subjects connected with that course of reading. Nor did I neglect the latest fiction. Everything by Compton Mackenzie and H. G. Wells and Hugh Walpole and Stephen McKenna and Alec Waugh I bought and read as they came out both at Oxford and afterwards. Never have I been able to pass a secondhand bookshop by, so volume after volume, new and second-hand, continued to swell my numbers – a process which has continued ever since!

In 1935 I inherited about 1,000 books, mainly theological, from my father; and in 1946 my mother's too miscellaneous volumes also fused with all the rest. Also one or two friends, such as the late Mr Henry Landon Littler of Southport and the late Mr John Edmond Fitton of Middleton Junction passed on to me their small collections when they had done with them. Consequently every variety of subject is to be found in my library. Although the collection concentrates mainly on history, biography, autobiography, and fiction (classical and modern), books to suit the taste of every sex and age and type of mind can be found within the walls of this house.

How does this library appear today? 'Hopecot', the name given to the house by my mother when my father retired to live here in 1932, is a small semi-detached house in a normal suburban road. On entry at the front door a visitor would observe a small shelf of books high up on the right over the drawing-room door. Pasing into that room he would see books along the window ledge, on the wall adjoining it, on a chest of drawers opposite the window, and on another bookshelf near the door. The books in this room are my mother's together with a large collection of books on the histories and correspondence of families and published letters and diaries from Samuel Pepys to Anne Frank and many literary autobiographies.

In the room opposite, approached by a left turn from the front door, are the majority of my father's collection increased by many similar purchases of my own. This room was my father's study. In the back room are a miscellaneous collection of local history, bound volumes of my own Correspondence and box files of family and other correspondence, and modern, very modern, fiction.

Upstairs, in the large back room looking down upon the small garden, is the main concentration of my historical and political library, very up-to-date in recent political contemporary history and biography and autobiography and the problems of the international situation. Most of the historical novels are here too. There are books close together from floor to ceiling all round this room and there is an island of bookshelves, full of books, in the centre of the room. In the passage leading from the top of the stairs to this Main Library the Weekly Hansard fill two rows on the floor on one side and maps of the First World War and other maps adorn the wall on the other. In all gaps there are portraits and pictures all over the house, everything, in fact, which would annoy the modern house-proud lady!

My bedroom is the receptacle for books of general reference such as the Concise D. N. B., encyclopaedias, directories, Crockfords, and dictionaries of every sort. And, then, of course, to me amongst the most important of all, there are the 185 volumes of my Diary and Scrap-Book, with their record of the history of my own times, the first half of the twentieth century, a record which will continue into the future so long as I remain capable of putting pen to paper! These are stored in cupboards and chests of drawers in the Main Library and in my bedroom.

What joyful hours I spend contemplating these treasures and gazing upon the beauty of their arrangement, taking one down here, dusting it, reading passages of interest, and either replacing it or finding another spot more suitable for it or to fit in fresh entrants to their proper places!

Although I now live alone I am never lonely. I do not read, as so many people do, to 'pass the time away'. On the contrary I always try to conserve time in order that I may do the reading and writing that I want to do. I hardly ever go out without a book in my pocket to read in buses and cafes or waiting in queues. Many people say that they would never like to retire as they would soon die of boredom! I cannot understand such a point of view. I still find it necessary to work for my living and to be able to maintain my library in existence by paying the yearly increasing rates on the house; but if I ever were to be in a position to retire I should never die of boredom! So long as I have my eyes and the use of my hands and the ability to 'go to and fro on the earth and move about in it' I could never become weary of life, not if I were to live to be 150 years old, as I believe, before many generations have passed away, medical science will have rendered it possible for human beings to achieve!
THERE are three methods of paper-making in use today: hand-made, mould-made and machine-made. Although most papers in use today have wood as their basis (or as we know it, mechanical and/or chemical wood pulp), let us first study papers made from rags by the hand-made method, a process which is, incidentally, the basis of all paper-making whether it is hand-made or machine-made, whether you make one sheet in twenty seconds or 1,400 feet per minute. Fundamentally it is all the same.

Hand-Made Paper

The principle as employed today is similar in all respects to that method employed many hundreds of years ago with the exception of, course, that to satisfy the demand it is necessary to use mechanical methods in the breaking-up and beating of the raw material. The raw material is received at the mill in the form of rags, the sources of supply being shirt and material manufacturers, stay and corset manufacturers, sheet, pillow-case, etc., manufacturers and last, but by no means least, old and dirty rags collected by the rag and bone merchants from the home. Many advantages and disadvantages can be claimed for the various types of raw material, but it will be appreciated that those rags which are received at the mill free from any impurities not only make finer sheets of paper, but at the same time are the least costly to use, because cleaning, boiling, and beating of rags have wood as their basis (or as we know it, mechanical and/or chemical wood pulp).

The rags are either hand-cut by female labour or mechanically cut, after which they proceed via a dusting machine to the boilers. During the cutting process all rags have to be sorted by hand to extract and remove such impurities as hooks and eyes, buttons, rubber, and so on, as a metal button getting through the beaters and being broken up into minute particles will cause blemishes to appear in the sheet of paper and so impair the quality.

These rags are boiled under pressure with a solution of caustic soda for a given period, after which they are subjected to further hand-picking, and then transported to the breaker and washing machine. The rags here are subjected to a beating process which is known as the beaterman, to loosen both dirt and impurities, and by a mechanical method filtered water is admitted into the breaker and the dirty water extracted. Once the rags are in a sufficiently clean state they are broken up into minute particles and will cause blemishes to appear in the sheet of paper and so impair the quality.

After bleaching, the rags are put into a rectangular machine known as the "beater" where they are beaten for a specified time until the beaterman is satisfied that the fibres are of the required length and the "stuff" is free from all knots or ficks. It is during the beating process that the paper is dyed to the requisite shade of either whiteness or tint. After beating, the "half stuff", as it is now known, is sent by means of pipes to the stuff chest from whence it flows over what are known as sand and dirt traps. Here, by means of gravitation and static magnets, any impurities heavier than the fibre in the "half-stuff" will fall to the bottom and be kept by means of ridges and magnetism, and the perfect "half-stuff" will flow freely to the vats.

It is from the vats that the sheets of paper are made. The vatman, having assured himself that the consistency of the "stuff" is in accordance with the substance of the paper that is required, by means of the mould and a frame, known as the deckle, lifts out the required quantity to form a sheet of paper. This is a very highly skilled job, for it will be appreciated that the dipping in and the extracting from the vat by a mould, say a thousand times to make a thousand sheets of paper at the rate of approximately twenty-seconds per sheet, is a very exacting process. Each sheet is almost perfect in substance, the variation being so slight that it is impossible for the paper user to tell the difference other than by the use of a paper testing apparatus. The sheet having been made, it now requires to be dried, sized, dried again, finished and sorted. In all, approximately twenty-three pairs of hands are required to produce a sheet of hand-made paper.

Mould-Made Paper

The mould-making process resembles the hand-made method in all respects as far as the sand traps, from them it differs in that a machine takes the place of the vatman and sheets of paper are transferred from the "half-stuff" to a wire covered cylindrical roll by a mechanical process, and then transferred by means of felts to the driers.

Machine-Made Paper

The majority of papers today are made on what is known as a Fourdrinier machine, which produces the effects of the vatman, the coucher, and the drier, at a far greater speed than any other method. I mentioned that it takes approximately twenty seconds to form a sheet of paper measuring 22" x 30" by hand. As a comparison, the following are the figures of a fast Fourdrinier machine. Its deckle (width of sheet) is approximately 250" with a speed of 1,400-1,500 feet per minute, making a paper substance of 20" x 30" 20-lbs 480s, and it produces 2,000 sheets of 20" x 30" in the time taken to make one by hand. It will be readily appreciated that it is only by means of the vast output of these machines that the present day demand for paper can be met.

It should be realised that paper making is not a question of weighing out a given quantity of raw materials on a scale, and always bringing them together in the same manner. To quote an example, it is easier to deal with printing inks scientifically than with paper, because the materials used in printing ink manufacture are constants, but the fibres used in paper making have many vagaries in their nature. It will be appreciated, therefore, that paper making is a craft, and the skill of its manufacture is still in the hands of the individual papermaker.
THE ALPHABET MUSEUM IN CAMBRIDGE

by Dina Mallion


In the light of his long study and experience, he has built the ALPHABET MUSEUM AND SEMINAR, situated at 50 St. Barnabas Road, Cambridge. This unique Museum, with its exhibits, library and archives, though small as museums go, is a repository of information drawn from all parts of the world. It contains vast material on the history and development of writing in general, and of the Alphabet in particular, systematically arranged. There are, starting with examples of pictograms and other primitive expressions of thought, exhibits showing the development of cuneiform, Egyptian (hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic), Minoan, Easter Island and other pictographic scripts; there are also the early syllabaries. There is material bearing on the complex problem of the invention of the Alphabet in the Near East in the first half of the second millennium B.C., and its development into the hundreds of existing alphabets the world over. A wall panel sets forth this genealogy very interestingly in the form of a huge tree. Other sections of the Museum deal with the history of calligraphy, printing, artificial scripts, musical notation, numerals, shorthand, and so on. Some of the exhibits are originals and some are casts of important inscriptions. Seminars are held on the premises on subjects arising in this vast field.

Admission to the Museum is free. It has been built on Dr Diringer’s premises and he has been running it out of his own means. He has given and still gives his valuable time to visitors to the Museum. These have been many and have come from all parts of the world.

There have been so many expressions of appreciation, and in many cases, of a desire to help in some way, that a society has been formed called “The Friends of the Alphabet Museum”. This will give to well-wishers who have expressed so much interest an opportunity to help Dr Diringer in his project. It is suggested that there should be a membership subscription of five shillings a year, though larger sums would certainly be welcome. These subscriptions would help towards upkeep and enlargement so far as is necessary, and some members might wish to give relevant books, or objects which Dr Diringer may deem suitable for display. A copy of the Constitution of the Society and other information may be obtained from me at 141 Gwydir Street, Cambridge.

RECENT PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS

CATALOGUE OF PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS IN THE REFERENCE LIBRARY, MANCHESTER.


The first part of this splendidly-produced catalogue of a magnificent collection was reviewed in The Private Library for August 1959. A year’s use of the volume has produced very few quibbles about its arrangement, though the present writer would have found it a help if the pagination had been given for the books listed, and if the press’s address had invariably formed a part of the historical notes given at the head of the entries for books issued by the press. But these are both minor details upon which it is ungenerous to dwell, when one considers the painstaking detail which is given, and the research that has been necessary to produce it.

It is pleasant to be able to say that this second volume of the catalogue maintains the high standard set by the first. It seems remarkably free from error (though surely Lord Kemsley’s Queen Anne Press has been closed for some years now), and though there are one or two omissions from the catalogue which damage Manchester’s claim to have a fully representative collection (nothing from the Karuba or Zauberberg presses, for example) these dwindle into insignificance beside the very fine collection of books from both major and minor presses which this catalogue records. One is glad to see that several of today’s private printers are helping to build the collection by presenting copies of their own publications: one must hope that this becomes a general custom.

As usual, too few of the recent crop of private press books concern themselves with any one of the many aspects of the printed word. Of those which do, by far the best is Wolperiana1. Most of this book is taken up with humorous drawings of Berthold Wolpe by Charles Morley. The text is set in the faces of Hyperion designed by Wolpe, and his Albertus is used in display. The book has been beautifully hand-printed by Susan Mahon and is bound in Linson velum. The edition is limited to 335 numbered copies of which 1-150 are signed.

Another publication which will be of interest to the more typographically minded is A Gaelic Alphabet, designed and cut by Michael Biggs2. This will also appeal to those who find not only difficulty but annoyance in reading [Irish] in Roman type3. The alphabet here shown is modelled on the traditional usual form and contains 30 letters, including two alternative forms. The equivalent Roman letter together with the traditional letter names and symbols are set in Centaur and printed alongside in red ink.

A less practical, but more delightful book from the same press bears the high-sounding title of The Easter Proclamation of the Irish Republic MCMXIV1/2. Originally set and printed in Liberty Hall, Dublin, on Easter Sunday 1916, the

1 The Merrion Press, 17 Malwood Road, London, S.W.12 (10s 6d; signed 21s)
2 The Dolmen Press, 23 Upper Mount Street, Dublin, Eire
3 The Dolmen Press (31 6d)

October 1960
Proclamation has now been set throughout in Poliphilus. It should be in the hands of every lover of fine printing.

Poetry once again makes up the bulk of the current private press publications. It is difficult to determine whether this is because more people write better poetry than prose or because ill-written poetry is easier to disguise than bad prose. While I would not go so far as to say that 'all that is not prose passes for poetry', I am sometimes forced to wonder if, in some cases, the material justifies the care lavished upon its presentation.

A book of poems which is worth every penny of its price is Poems and Drawings in Mud Time, described as 'a Collector's piece for 15 shillings'. Mr Beat's vigorous poems are aptly set in Erhardt Semi Bold (which is, incidentally, the first use of this typeface in a book) and are most ably supported by no less than 30 line drawings by Rigby Graham. A striking cover design by Graham has been printed litho on Linson vellum.

The Sayings of Jonathan Hanaghan — 'I utter what men mutter' — range from the sublime to the ridiculous. The many subjects treated include 'Death'; 'Men only live nobly when challenged by death'; 'Love'; 'Love is Adam from his divine slumber awakening'; 'Hate'; 'Anger', and even 'Parsons, Doctors & Nurses'. Mr Hanaghan tells us in his introduction that the Sayings are the product of a creative period lasting 20 days.

Those who prefer their poetry in a more traditional vein are abundantly catered for by David Bone in A Lenten Pie, a quarto volume of 134 pages. His delightful poems are set in Caslon Old Face, with the titles in 30 point Caslon italic. The use of swash letters and the long 's' in the titles give a delightful effect to the page. Bound in dark green cloth boards with decorative endpapers it is undoubtedly worth the rather high price of 30s.

Poetry of a very different kind is found in Poems from Paunacre House, published from Cambridge by Sebastian Carter. It is the first of a series to be known as 'The Ninth of May', which exists to print songs of mediaeval and renaissance Scotland, freshly discovered or hitherto little known. This volume, edited with an introduction by Helena Mennie Shire, gives a renaissance song in 'English', one in courtly Scots, and an outstanding ballad closely akin to versions from Denmark, and they are now all three printed for the first time. The booklet — limited to 100 copies — has been printed on a light blue Glastonbury antique, with explanatory text in Bembo and the poems in Bembo italic. Klang has been used for the headings and the title page combines the two type faces. The cover is black with a small two-colour label. The production is all that we have learned to expect from the son of the Rampant Lions Press owner.

The Klang Press, as it was founded by John Rolph three years ago the Scorpion Press has been endeavouring to put young poets 'on the map'. That it is succeeding is evidenced by the production of its five most recent booklets. A Family Affair is a monosyllabic sequence by Edwin Brock, whose first book (also published at the Scorpion) received high praise in the literary press. The second book, Raw, is by Royston Ellis (aged 15) and is a sequel to his Living to Gyp: the less said the better about this account of the exploits of our spare-time Teddy population. I can only hope that these 'poems' do not truly reflect the conduct of British youth. Arthur Worsley Russell's In Idleness of Air, is both textually and typographically most restrained of the Scorpion productions. Some of the poems have previously appeared in the Times Literary Supplement, Listener, and elsewhere. The fourth of these books is The Unlooked-for Season by Jenny Joseph, and although many of her poems have appeared in periodicals and some have been broadcast, this is their first printed collection. Finally, Christopher Logue's Songs from the Lily-white Boys, which purport to show the commitments an ambitious youth must make if he or she wants to succeed in Britain in 1960. None of the Scorpion publications is particularly distinguished typographically, the type faces being restricted to Baskerville and Gill Sans, although the covers of Raw and the Lily-white Boys show great originality of design.

During the last six months three booklets have been published from the Keepsake Press. The first of these, Purple Gold Mountain, is a Royal octavo booklet containing eight poems by Ahmed Ali. The author tells us in the introduction that these are a selection from 30 poems which are the souvenir of a visit to China during 1947-8. An original touch is the printing of the title in Chinese characters as well as English. This is followed by An Ode of Verse by E. St. Olave, a 12-page quarto booklet set in Bell, with decorations in the now ubiquitous Glen ornaments. Reminiscences of a Tax Inspector by Charles Se. L. Shrubsole — the employment of both Bembo and Caslon Old Bold — is a Royal octavo booklet. The fourth of these books is The First of May by Anne Cox, whose self-styled 'raw and rather gothic approach' deserves to be better known. In The Curtain sub-titled 'an Allegory of Inspiration' Mr Cox embarks on yet another original form of illustration. His poems are accompanied by nine original Pantographs, and the only information given about these unique 'shadow-printings' is contained in a note which states: 'The illustrations in this book (non-lithographic, anti-screen) originate in a process of "action printing" conducted personally by the artist'. However they are achieved, there is no doubt about their effectiveness in reflecting the mood of the poems, which are beautifully printed in Bodoni Ultra italic. Exquisitely bound in black cloth boards with horizontal white stripes, the edition is limited to 25 numbered copies. This is a collector's piece by any standards, and Mr Cox's self-styled 'raw and rather gothic approach' deserves to be better known.

The Wind at your Door, a poem by Robert D. FitzGerald is a production from the Australian Talkarra Press. Written in 'free verse' this forceful

October 1960
The name of John Roberts Press is well known to collectors of fine editions and privately printed books. Their productions range from the twenty-guinea magnificence of a folio ‘Song of Songs’ to the more modest charm of ‘Twelve by Eight’, recently published by the Private Libraries Association.

Many bibliophiles cause small books to be privately printed, so to clothe some favoured item in worthy typographical dress. They may cost little more than a good Christmas card – though there is, of course, no limit at the opposite end of the scale.

Those contemplating the production of a book or booklet ‘printed for their friends’ may expect interested cooperation from John Roberts Press Ltd, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1.

12 The Pump Press, Aldgate, South Australia
13 Clifford E. King, Via Priscilla 55, Rome, Italy
14 The Three Star Press, Bullynadrenta, Crumlin, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland
15 The Golden Head Press, 26 Abbey Road, Cambridge (15s)