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The Private Library

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE PRIVATE LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

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Recent Private Press Books

Vol. 3 : No. 5
January 1961
The Private Libraries Association
28 Parkfield Crescent, North Harrow, Middlesex
President: D. J. FOSKETT, M.A., F.L.A.

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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. 5 January 1961

Association Affairs

Annual General Meeting and Annual Lecture

This year’s Annual General Meeting will take place in the rooms of Sotheby and Co., 34 and 35 New Bond Street, London, W.1. The short business meeting dealing chiefly with the election of officers for 1961 will be followed by a talk given by a director of Sotheby’s, Mr A. R. A. Hobson. Mr Hobson, well-known to students of binding, will give an outline of the history of Sotheby’s, and has promised that attending members will have the opportunity of examining fine books and manuscripts that have passed through Sotheby’s hands during the firm’s history. Members are asked to note the date: Wednesday, 26 April, at 6:30 p.m. Visitors are also welcome, though they will not be permitted to vote.

Foreign Classics Committee

The Council has appointed a Foreign Classics Committee “to advise British publishers of foreign classics likely to be purchased in translation by English-speaking readers”. Parallel texts are advocated by the Committee, which commends the Greek and Latin series of the Loeb classical library distributed in Britain by Heinemann, and the model “Poetry of the Netherlands in its European context” by Theodoor Weevers, published last year by the Athlone Press. Professor Weevers prefaces the long parallel anthology with an equally valuable historical account of Dutch poetry. Negotiations are in hand with Penguin Books for the publication in their “Classics” series of translations from the Indian drama, and Oxford University Press inform us that Ibsen’s collected plays will eventually appear over their imprint. Requests have also been received for translations of works by Beaumarchais, Petrarch, and Angelus Silesius. Any suggestions from members on this subject will be collated by the Committee at their next meeting.

Private Press Books

We are privileged to introduce to our reviewing columns the owner of the Miniature Press and editor of the “Miniature folio of private presses”, Mr John Ryder. Mr Ryder will share the onus of reviewing private press books with Thomas Rae, the subject of this issue’s leading article, and Roderick Cave, its author.
Following the immediate success of the annual “Private Press Books”, the

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Private printing has had an honourable history in Scotland, and two presses operating in the early years of the nineteenth century—the Auchenleck Press owned by Sir Alexander Boswell, the son of Johnson's biographer, and Peter Buchan's Auchwedden Press—certainly do not deserve to be forgotten. Buchan's work, though very little known, is of considerable interest to the student of printing as, if the Dictionary of National Biography can be believed, he printed his books on a press of his own design which could be operated with the feet, and which handled type, copperplates and lithographic stones equally well. But despite this early activity, printing for pleasure languished, and although the example of William Morris at the Kelmscott Press encouraged a good many imitators in England there was very little more private printing north of the border until the late 1930's. The press which is run by Thomas Rae from his home in Greenock, is probably the most important of the modern Scottish presses. As a partner in an old-established family printing business it is surprising that he should find a sparetime interest in playing with type, but in the preparation of books and pamphlets which interest him he finds opportunities for self-expression which are denied the ordinary jobbing printer. The first book to be issued with the Signet Press imprint appeared in 1956, but the Signet Press had experimented a little with book design. A Dickens enthusiast, he says that he became so aware of the appalling quality of his own copy of Pickwick Papers that he decided to try to produce part of the text in a more attractive and readable form. The result was a little booklet on Alfred Jingle, of which he produced about twenty copies. Though he says this pamphlet has many failings—the titlepage weak; the marginal proportions all wrong, and so on—he is fond of the eldest child of his press and treasures the one tattered copy he still has. Having no introduction to members of P.L.A. he decided that he must have a name for his press, and so the Signet Press was born. Its first publication was a booklet on Thomas Bewick, Wood Engraver, which he produced in aid of an appeal for donations to the St. Bride Printing Library Fund. The pamphlet was very well reviewed and the edition of 500 copies sold out quickly, so that within a few weeks Rae was able to present the fund with a cheque for nearly £40. Inspired by this success, he soon prepared a second book, a selection from the poems written by Wordsworth as a result of his visit to Scotland in 1803. Wordsworth in Scotland appeared in 1957, but was not a success. Attracted by a leaf border-unit designed by Will Carter, Rae used it extensively in this book, with lamentable results: the border and text clash on almost every page. 'However, it's an ill wind . . . for the unsuccessful Wordsworth did a great deal to reduce my head back to normal size!' Rae remarks.

The next book was also a disappointment to him in many ways. The first to appear with a Scottish imprint had been published in 1958 by Andrew Myllar and Walter Chepman at Edinburgh. In order to mark their 450th anniversary, Rae did a considerable amount of research into their history, which was presented to the public in a charmingly printed monograph of some 20 pages in 1958. Technically this was his best piece of work (it is still my favourite among his books) but unfortunately Andrew Myllar, Scotland's First Printer was severely criticised in The Scottish Historical Review and its author says that it is his last as well as his first essay into the realms of scholarship.

Towards the end of 1958 appeared what has become the best-known and most successful Signet Press book, The Book of the Private Press, which was compiled by Rae and Geoffrey Handley-Taylor. This directory of printers for pleasure at work in the English speaking world was conceived in a chance remark by W. Turner Berry (then St. Bride's Librarian) that there was very little available information on the contemporary private press. Compiling it was a formidable task, and preparation took so long that it was decided to set the type mechanically (using Monotype Baskerville) instead of hand setting in Caslon Old Face, the practice in the earlier books. The Directory was very well received, by the public as well as the press, and Rae could probably have sold the pamphlet in copies twice over. Naturally the volume did not contain records of all the presses at work in the English speaking world, but succeeded so far that a recent writer called it one of 'the standard books of record in the private press field'. At present the compilers have no plans for issuing revised editions, but everyone interested in the little presses must hope that they will change their minds.

The autumn of 1959 saw the publication of a nativity play by William Kean Seymour, The First Childermas, an attractive edition of a play which deserves to become well known. For this Rae made very effective use of a redrawn woodcut in an early printed book, repeating his practice in the books on Bewick and Myllar. At the time of writing this is the last of the Signet Press books which the present writer has seen, though the next book, The Death of Mary Queen of Scots—'written by an eye-witness, by Secretary Cecil's command'—should have appeared before the end of 1960. It is set throughout in Victor Caslon (a reprint from Monotype Baskerville) instead of hand setting in Caslon Old Face, which should have appeared towards the end of 1960—though Rae has hopes of reissuing Watson's Preface to The History of Printing, 1713, as it contains much of value to the student of Scottish printing. Some day, too, there may be a new edition of Sketches by Boz issued from Greenock. But as the Press exists only to print what interests its owner, an outsider can only predict of its future books that they will be interesting examples of carefully planned printing.
"LOVE AND HORROR"

by Anne Renier

Readers of Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey are familiar with her satirical mention of the Gothic novels so popular with the circulating library borrowers of her day. The seven titles she gives, apart from The Mysteries of Udolpho, were long thought to have been inventions of her own, but Michael Sadlier succeeded in tracing copies of all of them, to find that they fell into well-defined categories of the Gothic Novel.

There were two main schools of the Gothic novel, the one deriving from the indigenous Castle of Otranto by Horace Walpole and The Old English Baron by Clara Reeve, the other from the German movement led by Goethe, Schiller and Burger. Both schools were in revolt against the supremacy of classicism in literature and were seeking freedom of imagination and the mystery of the unknown. The word Gothic, hitherto used as a term of reproach and contempt to mean barbarous, tramontane and antique, was applied to this new type of fiction to denote the mystery of the past, the unknown quantity of the stranger.

Both schools, roughly to be distinguished as the sentimental-Gothic and the terror-Gothic, used fear in various forms as the predominant emotion but to put sensibility first and the macabre second, whereas the followers of the German romantics led by Monk Lewis used romance largely as a vehicle for sensible and psychic dread, contrived to reduce the supernatural to an illusion at the last. The mysterious and marvelous were shown to have simple and natural causes.

Once the plight of the Gothic heroine, a persecuted girl of mysterious birth, immured in a half-ruined abbey sunk in the depths of some wild forest, has been accepted (a plight terrifying enough in itself), her fears can easily be shown as roused by the fluttering of tapestries in a draught, the flickering of shadows cast by the moonlight, or the shimmer of moonlight in a dim corridor. The terrors of the Gothic setting themselves provide the horror: the ruined tower, subterranean passages, dank dungeons, trapdoors opening on flights of steps descending into darkness, howling wind, rolling thunder and flashing lightning, sliding panels, mildewed manuscripts revealing some dread secret but torn off at the cogent phrase, the apparently animated portrait – all evoke an indefinable menace, a malignant presence.

These same trappings were used by the German terror-Gothic school, but became more sinister by being made to serve as the background for the corpse and spectres which circulated as freely as the living characters. Bleeding nuns, shadowy figures with lank hair streaming with water, hollow groans and heart-piercing shrieks were, from the heroine's point of view, more justifiably aggravating than the imaginary malevolence of a rustling curtain.

Yet, driven by a relentless curiosity, the heroines, though they might swoon from time to time, courted danger at every turn. They defied brigands, monks, madmen, spectres and the noble villains who had incarcerated them in such ghastly surroundings. They glided about, swathed in veils, encouraging the elegant hero in his desperate pursuit of the miserable, mortal or supernatural, who were threatening the peace of mind of these damsels in distress.

In 1917, when Montague Summers gave a lecture on Mrs Radcliffe to the Royal Society of Literature, he records that the subject was considered something quite new. During the next few years, he writes, "the Gothic Romance fast came into vogue among the inner circles of the advanced and elect." Today, the major Gothic novels have many readers, though copies of them are rare enough, and minor examples are even harder to find. But through The Mysteries of Udolpho and some of its companions on the shelf there can now be termed forgotten books, the contemporary satires on the Gothic school have sunk into oblivion, and not always deservedly so.

Eaton Stannard Barrett's The Heroine or Adventures of Cherubina, first published in 1813, has been reprinted in this century. In it, he satirized the influence of the sensational novel on the impressionable reader in the person of his heroine, Cherry Wilkinson, who, an avid reader of Gothic novels, conceives herself a heroine of romance. She finds a lease which she mistakenly thinks is a document proving her to be a child of noble birth instead of the daughter of a country squire. Styling herself Cherubina de Willoughby, she sets forth to find her true parents and to reestablish herself in her rightful rank. Seeking romantic adventures, she merely becomes involved in a series of trivial incidents; no dead hands clutch at her gown when she takes refuge from a storm in a ramshackle barn, nor, to her sad disappointment, does any surly scarecrow glare at her through the window. Her shrewd commonplace enables her to evade the various traps laid to ensure her virtue and she finally returns to rationality with the aid of the young man chosen by her future husband, who advises her to read Don Quixote and the Vicar of Wakefield instead of the heady romances of Samuel Richardson and the Gothic school.

Similar examples of contemporary satire survive only in rare copies: Sarah Green's Romance Readers and Romance Writers, for instance, and Edward Dubois' St Godwin: a Tale of the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries, a satire on Godwin's St Leon. Yet another, which recently came into my possession, is Love and Horror, an Imitation of the Present, and a Model for all Future Romances, by Irontastrensis, published by Stockdale in 1815, a witty attack on all aspects of Gothicism, its devices, trappings, characters and phraseology.

Love and Horror records the adventures of Thomas, son of Jeremiah Bailey, a butcher, and Annabella, daughter of Abraham Tit, a greengrocer. Following the usual Gothic preoccupation with high life, neither Thomas nor Annabella is satisfied with this lowly lot. The first discovers that one of his ancestors was scullion to the Duke of Normandy, and that he is therefore of noble descent, since the menials of royalty are invariably noble. Annabella, while loitering in a churchyard, finds a gravestone engraved with the words Nicholas Tit, Lord...
After assiduous search, she finds another bit of stone engraved Muckfield, and concludes therefore that she is descended from Lord Muckfield.

The story opens with the visit of Thomas to a theatre, described in the high-flown style beloved by the Gothic novelists: "The storm was beating tempestuously, and the lightning glaring around the playhouse at E——, when Mr Thomas Bailey was walking along in deep meditation by the door. The lights, the company, the noise, and the crowd, at last aroused him from his torpor; and throwing down the stipulated price with a contemptuous smile at the sordid bustle of the theatre, he made his way to the door and concluded therefrom that she is descended from the middle of a nearly empty pit."

After a while, his attention is arrested by a muffled female form close at his elbow, weeping, sighing and uttering stifled sobs. "She asks him how long he has lost his love. "Two hundred years ago, mysteriously," sighs Thomas.

For he had recently bought a portrait of a lady at an auction sale, the eyes of which seemed to portray him with such languishing sweetness that he concluded that the original of this picture was the person to whom the fates intended to unite the frame of Thomas. But on examining his prize at home, he discovered written on the back the name Ethelinda, joined to a date above two hundred years old. He had fallen back senseless in his chair, been resuscitated by a female neighbour and put to bed by his family, not realizing its importance to Thomas, had carried it off and sold it to an Armenian merchant at the door and used the proceeds to pay Thomas's boot gadget: a breathing device. "It was an Armenian, or a Ghost-Seer."

The villainous machinations of the Armenian now come into view. "As soon as the mysterious female, overcome by her sensations, threw her arms round his neck, and bestowed a burning kiss on the cheek of Thomas. With sympathetic fervour he withdrew her veil; when, to his infinite astonishment, by the glare of a neighbouring lamp, he discovered the face of Ethelinda!" It is, of course, Annabella, who happens to be a lineal descendant of Ethelinda. Thomas promptly transfers his allegiance to her.

The villainous machinations of the Armenian now come into play. Annabella is kidnapped and orders are given for the murder of Thomas. An attempt is made to drown him, a fate he escapes because he happens to have in his pocket another useful gadget: a breathing device. "It happened, however, fortunately for Mr Thomas Bailey, that he was an acute philosopher; and, like many other modern philosophers, fond of breathing gas through a tube. For this purpose, he was never without a bladder in his pocket filled with vital air, and accommodated with a brass pipe, and a stop cock... As soon as the son of Jeremiah found himself at the bottom of the pool, he seated himself on the weight; and drawing the bladder from his pocket, began to suck the tube with infinite contentment."

He escapes efforts to hang, stab and shoot him, to annihilate him in the furnace of a glass manufactury, and survives to be thrown into the sea. But as he happens to be in a peculiar kind of bag, he floats across the Channel, is captured as a mermaid, and taken before Napoleon. From France, he travels to Spain, to which country Annabella is on her way in the perfidious custody of the Armenian.

The kidnapped Annabella has also been undergoing adventures. "Low bursts of music being a favourite effect in the Gothic novel, Annabella "naturally..."
possessed a thorough knowledge of music. To rise to perfection she confined
herself to one instrument. It was an instrument, from the form and construction
of which, being extremely simple, was probably of high antiquity...it gives
ample scope for the expression, susceptibility, feeling, in fact, every power of
the performer’s mind. Its name betrays its eastern origin, it being called by the
northern nations the Jews’ harp.” With this instrument, Annabella has been
winning all hearts, soothing and reforming robbers, eliciting the life story of
Peter Pholy, a toad she has encountered while incarcerated in a dungeon, and
softening the hearts of the Spanish Inquisitors into whose hands she has con-
trived to fall.

At last, after sundry adventures in Spanish castles and dungeons, Thomas and
Annabella are reunited, “the hand of Thomas was joined to the sweet hand of
Annabella and the gentlest of breezes wafted their ship to the shores of England.”

The time Ircastrensis wrote his satire on the Gothic medley, its heyday
was past. For some twenty years it had flourished, springing into popularity
overnight in 1794 with the publication of The Mysteries of Udolpho, to end in
1820 with Maturin’s Melmoth the Wanderer, which attained the high standard
of the earlier examples of the type. But many of the novels published in the
years between plunged into the vapid depths of melodramatic sensationalism
and feeble bathos. And the absurdity of these was the target of Ircastrensis’s
satire, though he has a fling at the more sober writers by
making his explana-
tions more absurd than the incidents explained. By 1820, the Gothic fire had
dwindled to embers, to shoot up one more flame in Melmoth the Wanderer, and
then to smoulder in the bloods and dreadfuls of W. M. Reynolds, Thomas
Prest and James Rymer.

CLASSIFICATION FOR PRIVATE LIBRARIES IV

by D. J. Foskett

From time to time in these articles I have referred to abridged editions of
the large general schemes, designed to suit the smaller library with a stock
of books covering more or less the whole field of knowledge but without
a large number in any one particular class. The advantages of these abbrevia-
tions are that they usually come in inexpensive editions, they do not provide masses
of unwanted detail and consequently their notational symbols are quite short.
Owners of private libraries might well find that an edition of this kind would
suit their needs, at least for those parts of the field of knowledge on which they
have some books, but which do not represent their special interests. Where an
extensive collection has to be classified in some detail in order to bring out its
full content of information, it is unlikely that an outline system will suffice,
but some of them are certainly worth examination.

Among modern system-makers, the practice of publishing an “authorised”
abridgment probably began with Cutter; the first of the seven versions of his
Expansive Classification was designed for small libraries. Dewey himself, of
course, provides three summary versions of his tables, listing the terms equivalent
to the first three numbers of the notation. Unlike Cutter, Dewey retains the
same meaning for the numbers in the final full version. A much more important
short version of the DC, however, was the 11th edition, the “Standard”, which
was designed to meet the demands of small American public libraries. The
reputation of classification is very low in the U.S.A.; the “dictionary” catalogue
is almost universal, and what Bliss called “the subject index illusion” prevails.
(“It doesn’t matter where the book is placed on the shelves, so long as it is
indexed in the subject catalogue”). The 16th edition of DC has had a very un-
favourable reception in this country; many useful headings are omitted (“Cricket”!, “Pubs”!), and because of its original purpose the American bias shows
more strongly than ever.

The abridged edition of UDC, published by the B.S.I., is in English, French
and German, and so functions as a sort of multi-lingual dictionary also. It is
most fully expanded in the science and technology sections, and of course suffers
from its original basis on the DC, which is now so far out of date as to make
difficult problems for most modern subjects. This might not be such a draw-
back in the humanities, though even there the arrangement of some of the
classes, such as Philosophy, does not particularly inspire enthusiasm.

Both Bliss’ Bibliographic Classification and the Colon Classification have
been published in one-volume editions, which offer a more up-to-date and
scientific approach. Either of these offers a reasonable selection to the private
collector who has to cover the whole field of knowledge, but of course the
Colon system does require that the user should understand the original mode
of its construction.

A short scheme of a different kind is the Cheltenham Classification by Miss
Ethel Fegan and Miss Monica Cant, of which a second edition was published
in 1958. This was originally designed for the library of Cheltenham Ladies’
College, and after many years of use there was first published in 1937. It is
particularly intended for school libraries, and so reflects accurately the traditional
curriculum. It is not very detailed in subdivision, but the layout and explanatory
notes are clear and easy to follow, while the alphabetical index is deliberately
made in great detail to facilitate classifying. Individual authors, for example,
are often indexed though their names do not appear in the tables themselves.
The humanistic bias is light but very real: the index includes Gammer Gurton,
S. H. O’Grady, and Rutebeuf, but not Newton or Einstein.

There are doubtless other schemes which would commend themselves for
private libraries, for one reason or another, but those I have described have won
for themselves a secure place in professional library practice. I have not des-
cribed the Regensburger Decimal Classification devised by the President, since
this was the subject of a separate article by Philip Ward in January 1959. It has
several original features and will certainly be interesting to study in full.

There is another possibility that we should not overlook. This is to use one
of the well-known schemes, perhaps in an abridged version, for the field of
knowledge in general, but to turn to a more fully developed specialist scheme
for one’s special interests. There are many hundreds of such systems, some of

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which are described or mentioned in the chapters on classification in the Adlib Handbook of Special Librarianship and the Five Years' Work in Librarianship. Perhaps the best known special systems in Great Britain are the British Catalogue of Music, an outstanding result of modern classification research, and the Harvard Classification for medical libraries, originally devised for the London School of Hygiene, but quite widely used all over the world. The section of the Bliss Scheme for medicine was modelled on Barnard's system, of which a second edition was published in 1935.

A variant of this possibility is, of course, to undertake the absorbing task of making one's own system. In my final article, I hope to explain one method of setting about this sometimes exasperating but always rewarding labour.

**REPRINTING BY XEROGRAPHY:**

*some notes*

by Philip Ward

When a book goes out of print, the methods of obtaining a copy for private possession have hitherto been limited to two. One may either try to persuade a publisher to reprint the work, a lengthy and usually futile method; or advertise in the book trade for a second-hand copy, subject to market fluctuations, and sometimes equally lengthy. Now another method has been used successfully: it is by xerographic reproduction. The enterprising firm offering this service is University Microfilms Limited, 44 Great Queen Street, London, W.C.2.

Subject to a copy being available for photographing, University Microfilms undertake to make full-size reproductions of any book, providing that an agreement can be made with the original publisher if the book is still in copyright.

The process of reproduction is by a combination of microfilming and electrostatic printing. Ordinary book paper is used, and letterpress, line drawings, maps and diagrams are reproduced without any great loss of clarity.

The single-copy order is the basis of the firm's output, and as a result they have in stock a very wide and specialised stock of microfilm copies, though they possess no xerographic books in stock. The current stock list includes the Orestevinga Saga of 1887 (2.10.0d), the Biographical Memoirs of William Ged, published in 1781 (1.9.0d) and the important 1554 edition of Giorgio Vasari's "Vite dei ... pittori ... " (14.10.0d) and some four hundred other volumes of varying importance and scarcity. It is surprising, however, that a library should have difficulty in obtaining second-hand the "World list of abbreviations" by J. Taittress (Leonard Hill, 1914), especially as it was superseded in 1955 by Schwartz' "Complete dictionary of abbreviations", published by Harrap; nor can one sympathise with a librarian paying £3.5.0d for a xerographic copy of H. E. Tozer's "English commentary on Dante's 'Divina Commedia' " (Oxford U.P., 1901) at a time when at least half a dozen copies are reposing on well-known London dealers' shelves. Many of these items could, in fact, have been purchased more quickly and cheaply through normal trade channels, but as many of the listed books are quite unobtainable in this way, the xerographic method must be considered important.

The first of these component charges is for photography in a case where the book in question has not previously been microfilmed. This cost is £5.0.0d for each forty pages or fraction of forty pages. The second is for printing the same number of pages, or fraction of the number, and is based on the original format, ranging from 10/- for a size up to 8'/5" × 5'/0" to 30/- per forty pages for a size up to 11'/5" × 15'/0". The third cost is that for binding, and is 10/- for perfect binding, and proportionately more for more elaborate work. To work out costs for two actual examples: an out-of-print book of a hundred pages 11'/5" × 8'/5" never before microfilmed would cost £5.0.0d for photography, 60/- for printing, and 10/- for perfect binding, while a 240-page work previously microfilmed of 11'/5" × 6'/0" format, again perfect-bound, would also cost £5.0.0d.

An example of xerographic reproduction in front of me now is M. V. Hay's booklet "Winston Churchill and James II of England" published by Harding and More in 1934. When first published, this work cost 2/6d in paper covers and 4/- cloth-bound. Now, by xerography, the cost is £2.0.0d. The appearance is not attractive, but the book is serviceable. An expensive microfilm reader is not required: nor is valuable time spent in visiting a national library to study the item. The letterpress is clear.

The various advantages and disadvantages of this form of reprinting will be now be obvious. The relatively high cost is outweighed by the great asset of possessing facsimiles of, say, fine or early printing, or important literary MSS. But illustrations are badly served by the process, nor does the finished article have the familiar tactile quality of a book.

Bookmen should in any case be glad of the advent of another form of publication.

**TITLES IN TRANSLATION**

by Alice Taylor

What sort of play is *La Vieille Maman*? I asked, turning from the poster outside the Comédie Française to the lady behind the box-office window. 'C'est une pièce anglaise, madame,' she replied, 'de Cyr Barri'. After which I had no trouble in identifying *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*. French and German versions of English titles range from the downright mistranslation (*Mr Britling Sees It Through*) through the missed opportunity (*Mr Britling Sees It Through*) through the missed opportunity (*The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*), (the German version of *Arms and the Man* is called *Die Heldin*). The brilliance of this one dazzled me when I first heard it, nevertheless for quiet, lasting satisfaction my favourite translated title is Sophie Canetang for *Jemima Puddleduck*. Not only is *Gandang* a pretty accurate translation (*cane* = female
duck, stag = pond) but it does, like Puddleduck, sound like a human surname. And Sophie! Ah, Sophie! whoever picked that substitute for Jemima not only comprehends the French and English languages with his mind. He comprehends Beatrix Potter's tiny world with his imagination.

The French title of Wuthering Heights is of course Les Hauts de Hurlevent, which prompted a French literary critic, confronted with a pretentious novel of the kind which Stella Gibbons mocks in her Cold Comfort Farm, to invent the magnificent insult Les Bas de Hurlevent, in other words Wuthering Depths.

Most translated titles, however, like most of us who read them, are compact of virtues and vices. Der Kaiser von Amerika, for instance, is a simple, musical and easily remembered title for a play. I much prefer it to The Apple-Cart; but it has the drawback that it tends to give away Shaw's surprise ending. Whoever translated Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men into French must have been unaware that these words come from Robert Burns's 'To a Mouse'. Instead of calling the book Espérances Désespérées, or some such title which would translate the implied reference to schemes which gang a-gley, he calls it Des Souris et des Hommes. A Frenchman who here takes 'souris', as I dare say many of them do, in its slang sense of 'woman', therefore gets the same impression from this phrase as we get from the phrase Guys and Dolls. Having read the book he will still not realise his mistake, for this phrase is a superficially accurate comment on the story. A woman is indeed the immediate cause of all the trouble, but Steinbeck's title, properly understood, makes it clear that the point of this story is not that women spell trouble. Its point is that all George's energy, intelligence and loving vigilance cannot save his friend, who is doomed from the start.

Alexander Reid recently published a "near-English" version of two of his Scots plays, in the hope that both amateur and professional companies South of the Border may be tempted to act them. Should he have changed the title of The World's Wonder? Spoken in a low whisper, in almost any type of Scottish accent, 'The Warraid's Wonder' really does call back before the mind's eye the warlock's ship steering between the planets, Jock and Jeannie's moonlit kisses in the market place and Duncan Macrae on the Lyceum stage dripping magic from every finger-tip. 'The Weuld's Wousand', at least to my un-English ears, calls up nothing at all. Would it have been better to rename the English version of this play simply Michael Scott or The Magic Mirror, two titles which at least are accurate and unpretentious?

**REVIEWs**

The English Library before 1700: studies in its history edited by Francis Wormald and Cyril Ernest Wright, 273 pp. University of London, 35/-

Although this journal unaccountably failed to review this important book when it appeared just over a year ago, its contribution to the history of English libraries is so profound that a brief discussion, however late, may perhaps bring the book to the notice of those scholars and collectors who have not yet acquired it.

The editors modestly disclaim "to offer a comprehensive treatment of the whole history of the earlier growth of the English Library"; yet the lectures here printed certainly provide a fascinating framework for such a history, and the well-chosen illustrations and reliable index form an admirable complement.
to the scholarly lectures. Professor Wormald’s “The monastic library” and Professor Weiss’ “The private collector and the revival of Greek learning” both collect data previously scattered in a most interesting way, while none of the other eight articles lacks either learning or style . . . M. D. Knowles’ brilliant “The preservation of the classics” should be required reading for all arts undergraduates. If the achievement of “The English library before 1700” were only that of reminding us of the complex history of our collections, the compilation would be worth the reading. But it is far more than this, giving the lay reader an insight into one of the most significant motive forces in English civilization.

P.W.

RECENT PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS

Among the latest productions of the American presses are two first books from entirely new presses. The Rustam Press of New York, which has been set up “to present the work of contemporary poets in editions as distinguished as those usually reserved for the classics” has started its series of books (which are to be limited to 100 copies in each case) with William Seltzer’s Poems. A pleasant book, printed in Centaur and Arrighi types on Japanese mulberry paper, it costs $7.50. A facsimile edition on ordinary paper (and in soft covers) has been issued simultaneously by Voyages Press at $3.50 a copy, and it seems that trade editions of most of the Rustam Press books will be issued in this way. The Centaur Press set up at Continental, Ohio, has no such high ideals: its owner, Dwight Agner, is purely a printer for pleasure, and intends to use his press as the whim takes him. His first book is a pleasantly produced essay on William Maxwell, Ohio’s First Printer, of which 75 copies are available at $2.00 each, and we must hope the whim takes him often.

Art Laboratory Impressions is the title of a 32-page booklet issued by Wesleyan University discussing the work in the graphic arts produced at the Art Laboratory Press by students over the past 17 years. It makes truly frustrating reading – so much of what is shown is desirable for one’s own shelves, and so few copies of most of the books were produced: sometimes less than half a dozen. Rather more copies (75, in fact) of the Grace Hoper Press’s third Commonplace Book have been issued, but it is an equally desirable collectors’ item. Each page has been set in a different style to suit the mood of the quotation: some severe, some frivolous, but nearly all successful. This sort of book is not to everyone’s taste – the constant display of virtuosity becomes too dazzling – but this is a remarkably successful example of a difficult species.
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.