THE PRIVATE LIBRARY

COLLECTING BROADSIDES
COLLECTING ON A PROFESSOR'S SALARY
THE BOOK AS STILL LIFE
RANDOM REFLECTIONS ON READING
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The Private Libraries Association

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The Private Libraries Association is an international society of private book collectors. Membership is open to all who pay one guinea on January 1st each year regardless of the date of enrolment.

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Hon. Editor: Philip Ward, 28 Parkfield Crescent, North Harrow, Middlesex
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Association Affairs

This issue of The Private Library is the last to appear from its present Editor, who had the privilege of being founding Honorary Secretary and Exchange List Editor of the Private Libraries Association in 1936. The activities of the Association have quietly flourished and even multiplied since the days when three men could run its affairs from membership to editorship. There has, however, been a constant supply of collectors, printers, librarians, dealers and publishers who have been willing to give up a good proportion of their costly time to the furtherance of good fellowship among bookmen, and, while welcoming several of our most distinguished members to the hospitality of the following pages, we wish to welcome back Mr Roderick Cave, the former editor of this journal, who now resumes the editorship of The Private Library.

Mr Albert Ehrman, the partial catalogue of whose Broxbourne Library has already appeared in a choice edition, is joint author with Graham Pollard of "The Distribution of Books by Catalogue from the Invention of Printing to 1800 A.D., based on material in the Broxbourne Library". The few copies not taken up by members of the Roxburghe Club have already been sold as we go to press.

Dr Reinhold Regensburger, founding President of the P.L.A., is working on an illustrated study of "Beautiful Libraries", from which we have selected a brief survey of The Book as "Still Life".

Mr J. Rives Childs, our new President, gave the Annual Lecture, Some Random Reflections on Reading, at the National Book League's premises on 18 May. It is appropriate to thank the officers of the League for the use of their Lamont Room on that occasion, and to publish the text of the lecture in the following pages for the benefit of those members who were unable to attend.

British wood-engravers: Joan Hassall

The engraving of books on our cover by Miss Hassall is one of a number she cut to decorate the series of Readers' Guides issued between 1947 and 1951. Details of the fifty or so books which have been graced by her work since she started to engrave a few years before the war, and reproductions of some 200 of her engravings, are to be found in The wood engravings of Joan Hassall published by the Oxford University Press in 1960.

July 1965
BOOK COLLECTING ON A PROFESSOR'S SALARY

by William White

PSYCHOLOGISTS perhaps know why anyone collects anything: stamps, Royal Doulton figurines, or antique motor cars. Some people collect books by the yard, some for beautiful bindings, some—such as my friend Mr. Charles E. Feinberg of Detroit—for the advancement of scholarship, and I collect them for just one reason: research and study.

To collect letters and MSS and other unique items, it is undoubtedly helpful to be a millionaire, to have a high political office, or to be married to a rich wife—in that order. Having none of these attributes, I have nevertheless managed to gather together a number of books, some strictly for use, such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, biographies, critical and historical works, novels, books of poetry, and the sort of things any professor or writer on literary subjects would have in his study.

In addition, I have several collections: A. E. Housman, Ernest Hemingway, John P. Marquand, Emily Dickinson, Nathanael West, and Ernest Bramah. (Other smaller collections, in which I have not been concerned with completeness or rarity, have been picked up sporadically or have come in as review copies—D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Sir William Osler, Henry Miller, the American language, Thomas James Wise, Walt Whitman, and Edwin Arlington Robinson.) Each of the six or my "first team", so to speak, is a story on its own, how and why it was acquired; and that's the subject of this paper.

A year or so after the death of A. E. Housman, I became interested in A Shropshire Lad mainly, I suppose, because I could not understand how such poetry could be written by such a classical scholar as A. S. F. Gow had portrayed in his Sketch. As a graduate student in the University of Southern California, I was beginning to learn about scholarship; and putting A.E.H., the Lad, and scholarship or research together, I felt it was only natural that I should want to compile a bibliography of Housman. I had no notion what I was getting into; and now, almost thirty years later, I have not yet compiled the bibliography, but I have published eight-five articles and book reviews, edited a couple of A.E.H. pamphlets, and written a Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1933)—all on that ferocious Cambridge don who wrote such exquisite lyrics. In making the descriptive bibliography, I began working in libraries on their copies of A Shropshire Lad and Last Poems; then I went from bookstore to bookstore. It was during the Depression, and I was a student with no money; so I just took notes on the Housman editions, and didn't buy the books.

One bookstore in Hollywood had a copy of the boxed edition of the Lad and Last Poems, printed by H. P. R. Finberg at the Alcuin Press, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, MGMXXIX, in two beautiful volumes—still the most attractive Housman book I know. The proprietor refused to let me make notes and measure the books—"This is a bookstore, not a library", he rightly said (though I didn't think so at the time). He wanted $17.50 for the set, a frightful price at the time for me. I had nothing like that amount, but he let me pay on installments—so much a week. And that's how the whole thing started, my Housman collection, book collecting, and serious bibliography. For I soon discovered that there was only one way to do bibliographical research: own the books.

At the moment I have 155 editions, printings, and impressions of A Shropshire Lad, thirty-eight of Last Poems, nine of More Poems, nineteen of Collected Poems, including both the English Lad (1896) and the American (1897) first edition, and the rare (because of the nature of its publication) Selected Poems of A. E. Housman (New York: Editions for the Armed Services, Inc., 1942?), which Mr. Houston Martin of New York City gave me. This is, I believe, the largest collection anywhere of different printings of Housman's poems. Also in the collection are various editions of his Manlius, Juvenal, Lucan, The Name and Nature of Poetry (including one in Italian and a Mexican edition in Spanish), Introductory Lecture, Odes from the Greek Dramatists, off-prints and original appearances of Classical Review, Classical Quarterly, and Journal of Philology articles, Selected Prose, and a horde of ephemera and Housmaniana. One signature, but alas, no letters or MSS.

The first American edition of A Shropshire Lad (New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1897) is actually rarer than the English edition (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co Ltd, 1896), as it consisted of 150 exported copies (with a cancel title-page) of the 500 printed in England. My copy has the B spine label (John Carter and James Gow, 1950) and the A spine label (University of Southern California, 1950) on the bottom of the volume. A few years later, I discovered that A. E. Housman had written a couple of pamphlets on Housmaniana, and I bought copies of one.

When I began working in libraries on their copies of A Shropshire Lad and Last Poems, I used to spend most of my time in the library of the University of Southern California, where I was a graduate student. I was doing research on A. E. Housman, the Lad, and scholarship or research together, I felt it was only natural that I should want to compile a bibliography of Housman. I had no notion what I was getting into; and now, almost thirty years later, I have not yet compiled the bibliography, but I have published eight-five articles and book reviews, edited a couple of A.E.H. pamphlets, and written a Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1933)—all on that ferocious Cambridge don who wrote such exquisite lyrics. In making the descriptive bibliography, I began working in libraries on their copies of A Shropshire Lad and Last Poems; then I went from bookstore to bookstore. It was during the Depression, and I was a student with no money; so I just took notes on the Housman editions, and didn't buy the books.

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John Sparrow, A. E. Housman: An Annotated Hand-list [London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1952], pp. 19-20; on the title page, written in pencil is “r.25” (for one dollar and a quarter, the original American price); the price I paid is written inside the front cover, “$125.00”, although I believe Mr Robert J. Barry of C. A. Stonehill, Inc., New Haven, Conn., did not charge me that much. (I got it in 1941, when I was an impecunious instructor of English in Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington, earning $1,300 a year.) It bears the book-label of John A. Spoor.

My copy of the English first of the Lad has the Carter-Sparrow A spine-label; and although it is generally preferred to the American first, it cost me less, just $100, according to the price written inside the front cover. The condition of both is about the same, and the provenance of the English first is just as good as the American: it has a book-label reading “Ex Libris Frank Brewer Bemis”. One day, just after World War II, when I happened to be in Boston, I found it quite by chance in the Goodspeed Bookshop.

Every collector is full of stories about many of his items, and one must choose from time to time his favourites. Among my Shropshire Lads, for example, is a very cheap one, worth just 5 cents, later 10 cents, No. 306 in a Little Blue Book series of papernks (published years before the current paperback popularity), issued by E. Haldeman-Julius, Girard, Kansas, and measuring about 5 by 3½ in. Beside the book on my shelf is a catalogue of Little Blue Books, and No. 306 is listed under “Murder and Crime” with the title given as “Hanging of Shropshire Lad”!

During his lifetime Housman bristled at the idea of A Shropshire Lad and Last Poems in one volume, though he did agree to the Alcuin Press companion boxed volumes. Yet I have a limp-leather edition of the two books under one cover, published by The Richards Press, royal 32mo, in 1937, the year after he died. It does not seem to be a rebound book, and it was the only one of its kind (except for a few of the Alcuin Press volumes bound together in calf) until The Collected Poems brought all of A.E.H. together in 1939.

In looking over my Housman collection, one may wonder why I have a first edition of the Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins, now first published, Edited with notes by Robert Bridges (London: Humphrey Milford, 1918). It is there because the anonymous dedication, in Latin, is by A.E.H.:
The John P. Marquand collection is, frankly, of a novelist not of the first rank, for whom I have a certain affection. T. G. Rosenthal, in American Fiction since 1900 (Cambridge: The National Book League, 1961, p. 19), says, "A firm believer in Henry Adams's dictum that Boston is not a place but a state of mind, he never achieved greatness but was an excellent entertainer." I have just about every first edition of his forty novels, collections of short pieces, books he wrote introductions for, and pamphlets, plus reprints, English editions, and translations—275 volumes, not counting periodical appearances. The Late George Apley, unquestionably the best thing he wrote, an urbane satire of Boston, has elements of greatness in it and may well become an accepted minor classic.

Two rare items in the collection are the pamphlets, Do Tell Me, Doctor Johnson (Cleveland: The Rowfant Club, 1928), separate printing of a Saturday Evening Post short story; and Federalist Newport; or, Can Historical Fiction Remove a Fly from Amber? (New York, San Francisco, Montreal: The Newcomen Society in North America, 1952), an address delivered in South Byfield, Massachusetts.

Marquand has been the subject of two books, by Philip Hamburger, 1952, and by John J. Cross, 1963; with a third, by C. Hugh Holman, announced by the University of Minnesota, for May 1965. He is also the model for a murder victim in a detective novel, Three Thirds of a Ghost by Timothy Fuller (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1941).

Although Marquand has been published in England by Robert Hale and, since 1937, by Collins, as well as by several paperback publishers, he is not highly regarded in critical circles. Yet two of his novels, printed only as serials in American periodicals, were issued as books in England alone: Don't Ask Questions (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1941?) and It's Loaded, Mr Bauer (London: Robert Hale Limited, 1943?).

Occasionally I corresponded with Mr Marquand about various bibliographical matters—I published a few articles on him, and three check-lists—and more than once he offered to sign my first editions of his books if I would send them to him. Unfortunately I kept putting it off, until it was too late: he died in 1960 at the age of sixty-seven.
Dickinson items do not compare with, for example, those in the Jones Library in Amherst, Massechussets.

Unfortunately I do not have first impressions of the best of the early posthumous editions (she had only a mere handful of poems published during her lifetime, and these not by her): Poems, 1890; Poems: Second Series, 1891; Poems: Third Series, 1896, all issued by Roberts Brothers, Boston. I believe, in each case, my copies are second impressions. These three, by the way, taken together are No. 91 in the Grolier American Hundred, which considers that “the three series are in effect one book”. My collection does contain twenty-nine of these attractive little volumes, with the cluster of Indian Pipe stamped in gold (or silver) on the front cover. One, without the cluster, is an English edition (London: Methuen & Co, 1904) of Poems, 1890, printed from American sheets of the seventeenth edition with a cancel title-page. The latest catalogue I have seen (March 1965) prices a first of Poems, 1890 at $200.

The rarest, and next most expensive, of Emily Dickinson volumes is The Single Hound: Poems of a Lifetime, the first of the many edited by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, and published by Little, Brown, and Company (1914), successors to Roberts Brothers. Here again I have the second impression (1915).

Most of the other “editions” I have managed to obtain: Letters, Complete Poems, Unpublished Poems, Further Poems, then simply Poems again, and the various lives, some containing more verses, some with new letters. Then, after a few years, Bolts of Melody. All the while, biographies came out, several of them attempting to find a lover for Emily; the only good one was George Frisbie Whitcher’s This Was a Poet, 1938 and still the best biography. (Books by Thomas H. Johnson and Charles Anderson are also excellent.) There were at least eight Selections by different editors and of varying quality. The most beautiful—in design, in printing, in binding, in its delightful drawings (by Helen Sewell), and even in its felt-lined box—is Poems of Emily Dickinson, selected and edited with a commentary by LouisUntermeyer (New York: The Limited Editions Club, 1952). I am particularly fond of Riddle Poems, Emily Dickinson, [Northampton, Mass.]. The Gehenna Press, 1957, fifteen poems in a charming little book printed in an edition of 200 copies by Esther and Leonard Baskin and Richard Warren.

In addition to Methuen’s, British imprints on Emily Dickinson poetry include those of Martin Secker, Jonathan Cape, and Victor Gollancz. The Italians seem to have a certain liking for her writings, as they have translated her at least four times, and I also have a Swedish translation. Translation of English and American poetry, of course, is relatively rare—in comparison with novels.

Everyone, apparently, is writing a book on Emily Dickinson, and a collector has a hard time keeping up with the studies and collections by various hands: no sooner had I reviewed two books for The American Book Collector, than A Concordance to the Poems of Emily Dickinson (by computer, no less!) was published; in the next two months, three more Dickinson-iana were issued, and another one has just been announced by Harvard University Press. But best of all, scholars and critics can be grateful for The Poems of Emily Dickinson, including variant readings critically compared with all known manuscripts, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955), and The Letters of Emily Dickinson, edited by Thomas H. Johnson, associate editor, Theodora Ward (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958), each in three substantial volumes—scholarly productions in every sense of the word.

The one thing that Nathanael West and Emily Dickinson have in common is America: both were born and died there. They are so different that I wonder if I'm not the only professor on earth who has written on both, has done bibliographies of both (in periodicals), and has collected them both. My "Homage to Emily Dickinson: Tributes by Creative Artists", Bulletin of Bibliography, XX (May-August 1951), 112-115, lists poems to her, musical settings, plays and novels in which she is a character, and a dance; whereas my "Nathanael West: A Bibliography", Studies in Bibliography, XI (1958), 207-224, is a full-length and descriptive piece, supplemented by my "Some Uncollected Authors XXXII: Nathanael West", The Book Collector, XI (Summer 1962), 206-210, and soon to be brought up to date by "Nathanael West: A Bibliography: Addenda (1957-1964), The Serif, published at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio. All of this was made possible by the collections of Emily Dickinson and Nathanael West.

West has been a fairly easy author to collect: he died before he was forty, wrote only four novels, very few pieces in magazines, and his items have never commanded high prices; although now that his reputation is climbing, so will these prices. The Dream Life of Balso Snell, published by an avant-garde New York-Paris house, is the rarest (my copy in paper cost $25 some twelve years ago, before West had...
really caught on); and just last year, for the first time, I learned of a copy in cloth, which is now in the West collection at Brown University, Providence, R. I., where he graduated in 1924. *A Cool Million* and *The Day of the Locust* fetch prices a bit more than their original prices in 1934 and 1939, perhaps double. *Miss Lonelyhearts*, a genuine short classic of American literature and his best work, in good condition in the dust jacket, may bring $50 today: this is an indication of the growth of his stature.

Fortunately, I have just about everything in Nathanael West books, except the cloth *Balso Snell*: all the firsts, all the reprints, including the British (published by Grey Walls Press, Neville Spearman, Secker & Warburg, and Penguin Books), the play based on *Miss Lonelyhearts*, the three books on West (by James F. Light, Stanley Edgar Hyman, and Victor Comerchero), translations into French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Swedish (but not yet the Japanese and Persian), and a few of the periodical appearances of the 1930s.

With the West material, it is good to know that I began collecting him before his star began to rise, although I hardly think the fifteen or twenty pieces I have written on him have had much influence on his reputation. His appeal is and will remain limited, but he hardly needs any boost from me: *Miss Lonelyhearts* can speak for itself to those who will listen.

VI

Ernest Bramah is the one on whom I am currently engaged, doing research on his papers bought at a Sotheby sale in 1959 (and now in the University of Texas Library), and planning a trip to England to find out more about the author of the Kai Lung stories. But most of the work has been done in my own backyard—that is, among the Bramah books in my personal library.

It began like this. My wife learned about Ernest Bramah by reading about him in Dorothy Sayers' anthologies; and just a "taste" of one Kai Lung tale was enough to convince me that here was something unique. Seeing one day in a G. F. Sims catalogue (Autumn 1957), no less than twenty-one items for £35, I tried to get the Wayne State University librarian to buy them, although he did not know about Bramah. By the time the academic red-tape was untangled, weeks later, the books had been sold by Sims. I should have bought them myself. And that is exactly what I decided to do—if £35 is all that twenty-one Bramah items cost.

Having got some of the books, I discovered also that no one—except reviewers when Bramah books came off the press—had paid any serious critical attention to him. Hilaire Belloc, Dorothy Sayers, Christopher Morley, Sir John C. Squire, S. P. B. Mais, and Grant Richards have all praised him; so have E. V. Lucas and J. B. Priestley. If I wanted to do anything, I needed his works—all of them—for libraries at best only had a few of the Kai Lung volumes. *English Farming*, 1894, his first book, I borrowed from the Library Company of Philadelphia, which bought it on 22 August, 1894, catalogued it under Agriculture, and checked it out twice in sixty-three years: on 7 December, 1894, and 22 April, 1913. A reader had scribbled on the first page: "This book was written by an English "Smarty". Don't waste time on it." As it certainly had limited appeal in Philadelphia, I was able to buy it from the Library Company for $3. And generally speaking, the other Bramah books, though they took time to find, cost me only a little more: all sixteen of them, plus various editions and reprints in cloth and paper.

*The Wallet of Kai Lung*, *Kai Lung's Golden Hours*, *Kai Lung Unrolls His Mat*, *The Moon of Much Gladness*, and *Kai Lung Beneath the Mulberry-Tree* are not only different from anything I know in English fiction, but they have literary merit of a high order. I also like very much *The Mirror of Kong Ho*. His other books do not measure up to these Chinese stories; however, detective fiction buffs have a high opinion of the Max Carrados books, centred around the blind sleuth.

*What Might Have Been: The Story of a Social War*, 1907, is the only Bramah book I do not have in any edition; I lack the Cayme Press edition of *Kong Ho*, 1929, and the collection of stories, all printed elsewhere, *Short Stories of Today and Yesterday*, 1929, and the first edition of *The Eyes of Max Carrados*, 1923. But as Ernest Bramah is not widely collected—though Texas did pay about $10,000 for his MSS, galley-proofs and other material—I have been able to include some of his letters in my collection: these were the gift of Mr Charles Feinberg.

As with Housman, Hemingway, Marquand, Emily Dickinson, and West, so with Bramah: I have used the stuff I've garnered for articles in *The Book Collector*, the *Bulletin of Bibliography*, *The American Book Collector*, and *Notes and Queries*. Now I have a contract to write a book on him for Twayne Publishers, New York, in their Twayne English Authors Series, a job that would be very difficult, if not impossible, without the collection built on a professor's salary.

And that is why I collect books.
THE BOOK AS ‘STILL LIFE’

by Reinhold Regensburger

The still life bears, as Paul Zucker writes, much the same relation to other forms of painting as chamber music does to other forms of music. The painter wishes to contemplate form in itself, down to the most minute detail, down to an ant or to the dew drop mirroring the window, and he compels the contemplator to follow him. No space is left for contents which detract from the merely picturesque values, neither the human face nor a landscape, neither a battle nor a ship at sea. In more recent times the painter has restricted himself to the pure play of abstract lines or of colours.

Those who have enjoyed the happiness of seeing the perfect beauty of the still lives from Herculaneum and Pompeii in the Museo Nazionale at Naples, will be able to re-translate the rather indifferent copper-engraving from the "Antichità di Ercolano", shown here, into a living fresco or mosaic. Books and writing materials are seen in wilful disorder, just as if the owner had left them for a moment on the table (in reality he left them for eternity). You see from left to right: an atramentarium (a small ink pot), a stylus or a kalam (a writing instrument), a capsa or scriinium (container); the lid has slipped off and exposes six volumina or libri (rolls or books), probably written on papyros or charta (papyrus); from the top of each volume the titulus or index is hanging down, so that one is able to recognize the contents; another stylus or kalamos; a triptychon or triplices pugillares (three wax tablets connected with each other); a single tabella or puggilaris (a wax tablet either for short notes, or to be used as a letter, when covered and connected with another one); another atramentarium; open volumina or libri, and so on.

In the year 1442, a draper of the name of Corpici ordered an Annunciation to be painted for the altar of his sepulchral chapel in the church Saint-Sauveur at Aix-en-Provence. A gifted painter, deeply influenced by the art of the brothers van Eyck, the so-called Maître de l’Annunciation d’Aix painted in the following year the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, flanked by the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah. But only the central panel remained at Aix; the wings of the altar-piece are now in different collections. On top of the niches in which the prophets are standing there are lunettes containing still lives of books. The left one, above Isaiah, is now in the Rijksmuseum at Antwerp. You
Maitre de l'Annunciation d'Aix, 1443

Spanish still life, shortly after 1600

Francisco de Zurbarán, "St Bonaventura", 1626
see about seven books thrown about on a shelf, some open, some shut, some half-opened, leather thongs hanging about or used as book marks, another book mark, single sheets, two boxes—one round, the other rectangular. The light falls on the open pages of the books, the sheets and the boxes; the lines of the objects cross each other at various angles, and one corner of a book pierces the assumed ideal front surface of the painting in order to give it more depth.

Half a century after the *Annunciation d'Aix* there is a Flemish painting in the collection of D. G. van Beuningen at Vierhouten (Holland), in which the still life of books is combined with wash-basin and towel—both symbols of the purity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. On the shelf above the wash-basin there are books closed and open, one of them certainly a book of hours—showing the learning and the piety of the Virgin. A parchment label on which something is written hangs down from the shelf; one of the books seems to be sewn into the cloth into which pious women have their prayer books sewn; they can hang them at their girdles when going to church (but in this case the book looks too big for such a purpose). The wash-basin (not visible in the detail shown here) reminds one of a far more famous one: that on the exterior of the Ghent Altar-Piece by the brothers van Eyck.

There is in the Berlin Museum a Spanish still life painted shortly after 1600, showing a big roughly-used codex, on and beside which there are smaller open or closed books; one of them penetrates the ideal front surface. Vertical lines are brought in by a mysteriously shining hour-glass in the depth of the painting, and by a white quill standing in an ink-pot.

The next picture is not a still life in the strict sense; but you are able to concentrate your view on the parts forming it. It is by the great Spanish master Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664) and dated 1629. Zurbarán lived almost exactly at the period which, in Rome, produced the exuberant baroque of Bernini and Borromini. But what a distance! What self-imposed restriction of the means of expression! On the contrary: self-expression is carefully avoided; most of Zurbarán's works show a certain jejuneness, even dryness, revealing the shy soul of the master.

St Bonaventura (1221–1274), the Doctor seraphicus, was a pupil of St Francis of Assisi and a friend of St Thomas Aquinas; Dante praises him in *Paradiso XII*, 127. In 1257, although only thirty-six years of age, he was elected the second minister general of the Franciscan order. The legend tells us that St Thomas admired his friend's moving sermons,
so full of learning, and wanted to know the sources upon which his
friend's mind fed. Once upon a day he paid him a surprise visit and
asked him straight away to show him his, as he believed, very great
library. St Bonaventura led St Thomas before a book shelf of only
moderate size and contents; then he withdrew a nearby curtain and
showed him what was the unique source of his knowledge: Jesus
 Crucified.

This is the moment which Zurbarán has chosen, and we may now
omit the figures of the two saints and concentrate on the still life: two
meagre rows of books, among which we recognize St Thomas's own
works, those of St Jerome and of St Augustine; some few closed or
opened books on the writing desk; on the top shelf a skull reminding
us of the decay of all flesh, and besides, behind the now undrawn
curtain, the crucifix.

The picture had a very sad fate; it was in the Berlin museums and
survived the whole war undamaged; but a few days after its end,
5-10 May, 1945, it was destroyed by fire.

The last example is by the gifted Bolognese painter Giuseppe Maria
Crespi (1665-1747). Four shelves show a musical library. They are
stacked in a declining order: the top ones stand upright, the next row is
inclined towards both sides; in the third shelf the books lie around untidily,
and some leaves of music are negligently dropped above them. The fourth shelf shows seven books on their sides and two inclined,
and an inkpot with a quill.

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ON COLLECTING BROADSIDES

by Albert Ehrman

ONE great advantage in this rather neglected field of collecting, in
an age where every cubic inch of space counts, is that one can get
a collection of a couple of hundred Broadsides into a cupboard measuring 5 ft. by 3 ft. by 15 in., including a shelf at the top for the smaller ones (I describe a Broadside as a piece of paper of any size printed on
one side only).

The interest in them is manifold, as many of them were used, as
now, as “placards” that were affixed in public places—nowadays they
mainly refer to people “wanted” by the Police, stolen goods, registration
of voters, raising of rates, etc., but in the fifteenth and sixteenth
centuries they covered such things as almanacks, times for blood
letting, indulgences (even for the dead), ABC for children, announce-
ments of forthcoming books, lists of book-stocks carried by a travelling
bookseller, road maps for pilgrims, invitation for a shooting match from
one town to another, permission to sell salt, warnings about false
currency, to mention only a few. The earliest one in the Broxbourne
Library is the plea by the Pope for furthering the chances of his choice
for the Bishopric of Mainz (1461). Later there were orders for the
destruction of books by burning (shades of Hitler!), the last speech of a
criminal executed at Tyburn, lists of books bequeathed to a University
Library, a list of relics of a cathedral and the names of the mighty who
had visited them; in fact most human activities appear among them at
some time or another. Type specimen sheets are an important element
but these were not “posted up” but sent to prospective customers, the
printers and publishers. The Doves Press printed a notice to the
employees of the Bindery, which I quote here, as I believe it to be
extremely rare (ours is signed by Cobden Sanderson for Charles
McLeish [Sen.] the finisher of the Bindery and is dated 3 November,
1900).

In bookbinding, then, as in other crafts, I would recommend, for the
work's sake and for man's sake, the union of the mind and of the
hand, and the concentration in one craftsman of all, or of as many
as possible, of the labours which go to the binding and to the
decoration of a book. For some kinds of work, however, or for the
purpose of the concentrating and stimulating a craft and the industries
connected with it, and of forming a great and definite tradition under
the influence of which an apprentice may be more readily taught and inspired to do good work, and to conceive of it in its proper magnitude, it is necessary to gather together a number of craftsmen into one workshop, and to set them to work as one man. So with regard to the distribution of the labour and to the employment of craftsmen by capitalists, great or small, I may be allowed to make this remark, that it is not so much the form as the spirit and conception of the workshop as at present constituted, which I conceive to require amendment. A man may well be set to work by another, and many men and women may well co-operate to the production of a single work. The important thing is that there shall be a common and well understood notion of what the work is or ought to be, and that there shall be a common and energetic desire to contribute to the completion of that work, each in due degree, for the work's sake, and the workmanship, and even for the shop's sake. And if in this field I might suggest a practical reform, it would be the transformation of the workshop from a place in which to earn a wage, or to make a profit, into a place in which the greatest pleasure and the greatest honour in life are to be aimed at, pleasure in the intelligent work of the hand, and honour in the formation and maintenance of a great historic tradition.

There is, as far as I know, no bookseller who specializes in broadsides, but if one reads one's catalogues carefully one can be lucky. A few years ago, a Baskerville book came up at Sotheby's with the rare Type Specimen Sheet bound in at the end: it was fully described, but I seem to have been the only one who "spotted" it and it went at a very reasonable price. As I just missed this sheet some thirty years before at double what it now cost me, and as I never saw one in between I consider myself lucky, just as I hope you will be.

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**SOME RANDOM REFLECTIONS**

**ON READING**

by J. Rives Childs

An abridgement of the Private Libraries Association

Presidential Address, May 1965

I HAD occasion to interview a few months ago at my college in Virginia ten of the outstanding senior classmen. One of these who had impressed me by his conversational French was asked what he had read of Balzac. "Nothing", was his astonishing reply. "And Flaubert?" "Nothing." After several other negative answers given my persistent interrogation, he finally blurted out, in his embarrassment: "To tell the truth I don't care much for reading." At that moment I exploded. "If you don't care for reading what in the name of all the gods are you doing in college?" He was silent. "Have you any idea?" I continued, "what a poverty-stricken life you are preparing for yourself? As the years pass I see you before a television set, your mind deadened by visual images. May God have mercy on your soul!"

I read an article the other day by a teacher of English in the New York City public schools reporting the wide diffusion of published study and examination aids for students, containing brief summaries of those works of literature taught generally. The writer remarked ironically that "soon time-wasting reading will be a thing of the past". She concluded pertinently that the study and examination aids were complete in every way but one, namely: "What do YOU think?" We are fast approaching a robot world where the machines will presumably do that for us.

I believe these trends are far from peculiar to the United States. In the last several years I have had not one but two eminent Italian bibliophiles offer to dispose of some of their treasures with the sad comment that their children were completely uninterested in books. They were men who had derived some of their greatest joys in life from the formation of libraries comprising many works of the greatest rarity. In their disillusionment over the indifference of their sons to the books collected with such loving care their one preoccupation was to see that they passed into the hands of those who would appreciate them as they had. They were less concerned with selling them at a possible profit than with ensuring that their books would be useful. There was something infinitely pathetic in their bafflement at the unreceptivity of

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their sons to those values on which their fathers had set such store.

These developments all lend force to Arthur Koestler’s conclusion expressed a few years ago that we are entering on a new Dark Age; the evidence is patent in these and many other instances. The editor of one of the most serious American magazines rejected an article, subsequently published in England, on the grounds that it was “too erudite” for its readers. People in the know in New York informed me early this year of the increasing difficulty authors had in placing anything overly serious with a publisher; it must be jazzed up with a rich ingredient of sex. One of the great publishing firms in Germany recently put on the market a classic work with the inclusion deliberately of pornographic illustrations to promote its sale, according to a statement made to me by one of those connected with it. The project was eminently successful: 8,000 sets were sold in an expensive edition which might otherwise have been a commercial failure notwithstanding the intrinsic merit of the text. We may wring our hands over this vulgarization and commercialization of culture; they are distinguishing aspects of contemporary society, signal signs of the times.

* *

One of the endless controversies of commentators on Shakespeare has been the extent to which his own personal views are reflected in his works. For my own part I think that the great mark of a genius such as he and Chekhov is to be found in the detachment with which they looked at and interpreted life, with a minimum intrusion of their personalities. So far as Shakespeare is concerned this must be a matter of conjecture as he left no notebooks or other expressions of his intimate personal outlook as Chekhov. As the latter did I propose, in the brief time remaining to me, to present Chekhov’s viewpoint of what he considered as the role of an artist in the thought that we may reasonably draw the inference that Shakespeare, to whom Chekhov stood so close on the peaks of Olympus, must have shared much the same attitude towards his work.

Let us begin by noting this judgment of Chekhov by a colleague, Kuprin, who wrote of him:

In his astonishing objectivity, rising above particular pains and joys, he knew and observed all. But neither anything nor any person was allowed to disturb his clear-seeing eye. He could be good and generous without loving, tender and attentive without attachment and of good works with no expectation of any reward.

Now this objectivity was perhaps Chekhov’s most significant characteristic and affords us a key both to an understanding of his attitude towards life in general and to his art in particular. Unlike most of his Russian contemporaries, Chekhov refused to be drawn into declaring himself on political, social or religious issues. When reproached that his work did not contain a message he replied that he had no patience with those who sought a tendency in his writings, “who insist on seeing in me either a liberal or conservative . . . All I wish to be is a free artist.” How dim his political awareness was is evidenced by his statement in 1888 that “there will never be a revolution in Russia”. Yet it is testimony to the insight of his art and its fidelity to the truth he worshipped so passionately, if not to his political acumen, that in no other Russian writer are the causes of the Revolution more faithfully depicted. One of his French biographers Mlle. Sophie Lafitte has remarked: “The Russia of Chekhov is more real, more concrete, and more varied than that of Gogol, Turgenev or even of Tolstoy.” That is to say, he saw life clearly and saw it whole, even if he refrained from drawing political or other lessons from what he described. It may well have been that it was by reason of this very dispassionate attitude, of one who refused to be drawn into taking sides, that he was enabled to mirror Russian life with such consummate skill. Replying to a criticism of this detachment from his friend Suvorin, Chekhov wrote:

You find fault with my objectivity, calling it indifference to good or evil, an absence of ideals and ideas, and so forth. When I describe horse-thieves you want me to say, “The stealing of horses is an evil.” But, after all, that’s long been known, without my saying it. Leave it to magistrates to condemn them. My job is simply to show what they are like.

Perhaps the clearest expression of Chekhov’s conception of the artist’s role is contained in another of his letters:

In demanding from your artist a conscious attitude to his work you are right, but you confuse two concepts: the solution of the problem and the correct presentation of it. Only the latter is obligatory for the artist. In *Anna Karenina* and *Evgeny Onegin* not a single problem is solved but they completely satisfy us because all the problems are presented in the right way.

Chekhov once remarked that one must feel as cold as ice when writing a story. Sentimentality he abhorred or any trace of false sentiment. Gorky, writing to him in 1898 about his play *Uncle Vanya*
observed:

You have an immense talent... But it seems to me that in this play you treat men with a diabolical coldness. You are as indifferent as the snow.

Chekhov had learned in his medical practice that a doctor must be as cold as ice when treating a patient. It is out of this consideration that physicians generally do not prescribe for members of their immediate families. What is demanded is a coldly clinical analysis without the intrusion of any sentiment. It was this that Chekhov brought to bear when writing his stories and plays. As a medical practitioner he was habituated to objectivity. Through it he gained an insight into the human heart which enabled him to apply his scalpel with as much skill in literary as in his medical work. He himself testified:

My medical studies undoubtedly had a serious influence on my literary activities. They enlarged considerably the field of my observations and enriched me with knowledge whose value for me as a writer can only be understood by a writer who is himself a doctor.

Nothing disturbed Chekhov more than the charge frequently brought against him that he was a pessimist because of the pessimism reflected in the later plays and stories. Let us note how the same charge has raged about Shakespeare. A Russian critic has pertinently observed that the depressing elements in Chekhov's work were inherent in the society he portrayed rather than in himself. May we not similarly remark that such elements in Shakespeare are a reflection less of his own personal attitude than of those tragic aspects of the life he delineates?

I have confined myself to two writers when there are so many of whom I might have spoken who have been added to my shelves these last years: George Orwell, Kafka, Brecht and Malcolm Lowry to name a few of the outstanding. I count as notable milestones in my reading these last years Kafka's Letters to Milena and Brecht's Mother Courage and Galileo. I know of no more effective antidote to the pessimism with which we are afflicted at times than the works of these writers and of Shakespeare and Chekhov. They uplift and bring us comfort in what they tell us of how others have faced the dark journey we are travelling.

We now come to the second writer. I count as one of the most brilliant and influential of modern poets Auden as indifferent to the charge frequently brought against him that he was a pessimist because of the pessimism reflected in his immediate predecessors such as Yeats, Eliot and Sassoon or, of later vintage, to name only two, Dylan Thomas and John Betjeman. Until the current 1965-4 volume there is not a single entry under his name in Book Auction Records.

The reason for this apparent reticence on the part of the book-collecting fraternity is perhaps due to some extent to the fact that very few can ever hope to possess his first Poems, 1928, largely printed by Stephen Spender on a hand press. Nevertheless it is strange that a poet of the first rank has had to wait so long for an authoritative bibliography.

Mr Bloomfield's book is well arranged, in the style which is coming to be accepted as a standard format for author bibliographies and so far as can be readily ascertained his text is accurate. The discursive notes which follow the collations can be rather tedious, as for example on the comparative rarity of Poems (1930) in this country as compared with the U.S.A. John Carter (in Taste and Technique in Bookcollecting) suggested that the first edition of this book might be commoner in the U.S.A. as some 100 or 150 copies are known to have been sold by a New York bookseller. If Mr Bloomfield's supposition that 1,000 copies were printed is near the truth then the argument seems a rather thin one and hardly worth quoting unless there is evidence that a significant number of the copies printed remained unsold. Again the account of the publishing history of The Dog Beneath the Skin is very woolly and ambiguous and might well have been pruned.

However, these are personal quirks and it is certain that this bibliography will be a very welcome addition to the reference shelves of all librarians and collectors with an interest in modern poetry.---L.E.D.


Let it be said immediately that this bibliography of Robert Burns must surely become the vade mecum of librarians and students of Burns for a long time to come.

Professor Egerer, Curator of rare books and manuscripts at the University of New York and also associate professor of English, together with his publisher, deserves our thanks for making this tremendous work generally available. With great erudition and scholarship the professor has compiled a Baedeker-like guide through the great mass of Burns' published work in all media, excluding only anthologies and reprints of poems and prose in periodicals.

That there are 1,352 items numbered and listed and that the professor states in his preface that he has personally examined all but some 130 of these is indicative of the thoroughness of the research. The listing of the dated material

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is chronological and as one would expect the earlier editions are dealt with in greatest detail: full description of title pages, formats, signatures, contents, and so on, and supplemented by valuable information on publishers and the background of the various editions. The introduction of original and unpublished poems and letters in succeeding editions is fully noted and one can trace the gradual emergence of the full canon of Burns' work. From 1802 onwards a much more abbreviated form of description is adopted, with certain exceptions, namely where new and original material is published for the first time, or important publications such as Cromek's "Reliques".

The undated publications, which are listed in the second section of the book, are arranged alphabetically by place of publication and are followed by a listing of some eighty items of Burns' work translated into twenty-five languages. The final section is a check-list of material first published in periodicals.

The work is completed by two appendices and an excellent index. The appendices are (1) Bibliographical notes on Burns and "The Scots Musical Museum" extracted from D. A. Randall's article in the "New Colophon" (April 1948), and (2) a check-list of the various issues and editions of "Thomson's Original Scottish Airs", reprinted from "Transactions of The Edinburgh Bibliographical Society", 1918-39.

Altogether a work of great value, and proof if proof were needed of Burns' great popularity. It might also answer the question posed by Professor Egerer in his preface, "Was Burns more popular than Shakespeare in the nineteenth century?"—John Roberts

How to Identify Old Maps and Globes. By Raymond Lister. 256 pp. G. Bell & Sons Ltd. £3 1os. od.

The study of old maps and globes and the collecting of them has been well documented but Raymond Lister has managed to approach the subject of how to identify them in his own way. So often a book of this type falls between two stools in that it doesn't specify fundamentals for the beginner but is too dull for the advanced collector. It seems to me that this book can be useful to everyone. Just about half the volume is taken up with "A List of Cartographers, Engravers, Publishers and Printers Concerned with Printed Maps and Globes from circa 1500 to circa 1850" which gives the names and variations of names (Latinized versions, for example), dates, nationality, and sometimes the major works of more than 2,000 prominent persons in the history of cartography. The first chapter deals with a brief and clearly written history of mapping from the earliest times. There are fifty-nine well chosen and nicely reproduced black and white plates, the majority of which are referred to more than once in the text for different illustrative purposes. Another chapter deals with celestial maps and charts and another with globes and armillary spheres. In the excellent chapter on the methods of map production line drawings in the text are well used for illustration of techniques. The core of the book lies in the chapter on decoration and conventional signs and in the appendix which covers the use of watermarks in dating old maps. These are the most fascinating means of identification. The appendix on watermarks contains several pages of drawings depicting over 170 watermark designs with a key to their dates.—Paul Latcham

Chaucer, 1352-1602. Notes and facsimile texts designed to facilitate the identification of defective copies of the Black-letter folio editions of 1532, 1542, c. 1550, 1561, 1598 and 1602. By John B. Hetherington. 22 pp., foolscap, reproduced from type-writing. Published by the author, Vernon House, 26 Vernon Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham 16. 7s.

The early folio editions of Chaucer are most frequently to be found these days in more or less fragmentary condition, a circumstance which can make their identification a somewhat troublesome task unless one has access to one of the major libraries. Mr Hetherington does not claim to be an authority on Chaucer, but he has assembled a considerable amount of information about six early folios which collectors in this field should find very handy. He supplies some preliminary notes on the production of the early editions (tilting at a few authorities in passing), gives a facsimile of the opening page of the Nunnes Priests Tale from each edition and provides brief collations, measurements and other aids to identification. Xerographic reproduction is very suitable for short, illustrated texts of an esoteric nature such as this, and other collectors who have accumulated specialized material might well be encouraged to publish in this way.—D. J. C.


A bibliography of bibliographies of erotica. Describes seventy-eight titles (of which about a third are listed as of particular importance) with critical notes and locations of copies in the British Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bodleian, Cambridge University Library and the Institute of Sex Research, Indiana.—D. J. C.
Letters to the Editor

Sir,—Rigby Graham's article on "Bookbinding with Human Skin" ("The Private Library", January 1965) is delightful macabre stuff, but I cannot let him get away unchallenged with his comment on tawed leather. My experience in dealing with very many books covered in alum-tawed leather or sewn on thongs of it (most of them bound in the sixteenth century or earlier) is that this material is very much more durable than vegetable-tanned leather, all of which shows more or less deterioration over the years. Much of the deterioration is due to the comparatively recent damage due to sulphur dioxide in the atmosphere; alum-tawed skins are not liable to damage from this cause.

Yours, etc.,
ROGER POWELL

Sir,—I read with pleasure of Mr Roger Powell's delight in my article, and with interest his challenge to my comment on tawed leather. I wrote "tawed leather from any animal (often known as Hungarian leather) is on the whole not as durable as tanned leather"... I think anyone will admit to the implied qualification. This I based primarily on Glaister, who states categorically1:
"For bookbinding purposes tawed leather is not as durable as tanned leather."

From those older craftsmen (archivists and trade binders) with whom I have spoken, I have noticed that they all have reservations regarding the durability and permanence of alum tawed skins, though few would commit themselves (the wisdom of age perhaps?) as definitely as Mr Powell or Mr Glaister, specifically as to why. I felt there must be some sound reason, for these men were not fools.

When I read Glaister's statement, backed by his very impressive lists of acknowledgements to individuals (Sydney Cockerell amongst them), firms and foundations for checking, revising and authenticating the entries to his work, I felt I had some backing for my guarded comment.

From the middle of the fifteenth century when John di Castro learned the secret of the preparation of alum and began to make it in Tolfa (the first authenticated instance I believe), down to the middle of the nineteenth century when Peter Spence altered the method of manufacture by substituting aluminous shales from coal for the alum schists used earlier, this alum, the finest known as Roman alum, always contained small amounts of iron oxide.2 It is this which many believe is responsible in some measure at least, for the deterioration and discolouration (in early times) of tawed skins.

I would certainly not argue with Mr Powell—a person who speaks from a lifetime of practical experience which I admire, respect and cannot match.

I merely offer those reasons which led me to my conclusion, erroneous in the light of Mr Powell's experience though it might appear to be.

Yours, etc.,
RIGBY GRAHAM

2 John Bailar, Professor of Chemistry, University of Illinois; Howard Spence, Manchester Alum Works.

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.