The Private Library
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THE BOOK WORLD

THE PRIVATE LIBRARY

With this issue of the magazine the Editor is very glad to welcome Geoffrey Wakeman who will share the task of editing The Private Library. Mr. Wakeman will already be well known to PLA members through his articles and reviews which have appeared in past issues, and I am confident that members will very soon notice and appreciate his changes in the magazine.

With this issue The Private Library enters its eleventh year of life. Like most adolescents it is likely to become more argumentative, and in 'The Book World' which we intend to be a regular feature we shall be commenting on various features of the contemporary book-collecting scene. Readers who find us boring or outrageous or merely jejune — and no doubt we shall be all these things — are invited to let us know their views. We have already received two comments on recent issues of the magazine. Rigby Graham took us to task, rightly, for our rash statements that it has never been Private Library policy to reprint articles which have previously appeared elsewhere, but generously pointed out that it was a two-way traffic and that a good many of our original articles have subsequently been reprinted elsewhere. The other comment, by Mr. H. J. D. Yardley, was on the 'Recommendations to contributors' which we printed in the Spring 1966 issue, expressing his surprise that our reviews of commercially published books were so much less informative on production details than those of privately printed material:

"Knowing that one of the primary concerns of the PLA is with literary scholarship it may be felt that the physical properties of the commercial product should not be given much prominence but that..."
this is not so in the case of Private Press Books. If my surmise is correct, how do you defend the distinction?

'Are the physical and aesthetic values of the commercially produced book of no significance to the potential purchaser? Has he no interest in, say, the quality of the paper? Does he not care about the typography? If the margins between the text and the edges of the page have been butcheted by the guillotine does it really make no difference to him? (I have here a book issued in 1960 by a very well-known London publisher. The space between the illustration on one of the plates and the foredge is one thirty-second part of an inch. On the opposite side of the plate there is no space at all; the illustration disappears into the joint.) Is he concerned that, after the early disintegration of a paper dust jacket - which may or may not be designed in good taste - there will be exposed an aesthetically dull, unadorned (almost) and lifeless case binding? What a difference from - to quote one example - the gold-blocked covers of Macmillans 'Cranford' series issued around the turn of the century! ('Crown Octavo. Cloth Elegant, Gilt Edges. 3/6d. per vol.'.) Elegant! Already a generation exists which knows not the word except through its retention in the dictionary . . . Other people, better qualified than I, could elaborate this theme.

'The publisher will say, rightly, it is a matter of economics. But the producer of any article will produce only what will sell, so it comes round, as always, to the purchaser. The buying public can get, in any commodity, anything it wants if it, in large numbers, demands that thing. It is here that the reviewer can play a vital part by helping to create an interest in, and therefore a demand for, quality in all aspects of the book, but how many do so?

'Perhaps, eventually, we might get a very much larger number of books whose physical properties would be a credit to the publishers - and to the nation - and whose case bindings would be decorated in good contemporary taste by first-class artists of whom there are many ready for the opportunity should it arise. And after that, who knows?, we might even see a revival of interest in the hand-bound leather covered book, skilfully put together and ornamented in equally good taste - an article to give improvement to the mind (for it should be used) and delight to the eye for 300 years, maybe.' Would other readers wish our reviewers to comment more fully on production details?

HEATHERINGTON v. CARTER

Many readers of the TLS as well as the present writer have been delighted with the increasingly acrimonious correspondence, which appeared a few weeks ago, about the value for money represented by Victorian detective fiction, the catalogue of the Glover/Greene collection. Our own sympathies lie with Mr Hetherington, who was performing a useful service to the book-buying public by complaining in print rather than by writing to the publisher. Mr Max Reinhart's suggestion that Mr Hetherington should return his copy to the Bodleian as they 'have a long waiting list of people wanting the book' is a less telling blow than it seems: there are libraries aplenty which believe it is their responsibility to obtain bad bibliographies as well as good ones. Did Mr Reinhart underestimate the demand when placing his print order, or was the edition deliberately made smaller than the demand? [See the article 'Limited editions' in Carter's ABC for book collectors.]

Those readers of the Private Library who read Mr Hetherington's Selina's Aunt, by the way, will be interested in his 'Vernon House Miscellany no. 1' for 45. a 'genuine variorum edition' of Don, Dan (obtainable from him at Vernon House, 26 Vernon Road, Birmingham 16.) The extensive critical apparatus, with the references to Quotes and theories, to the Lambeth and Bodley mss, etc., is particularly good.

A PRINTER IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

In common with all who have any concern for English books we cannot survey the affair of the Caxton Ovid manuscript with anything but alarm and despondency. It will be recalled that half of this manuscript was sold at the end of June 1966 to El Dieff for £90,000. It was not until September that the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art issued its decision for a three-months' delay in the granting of an export licence. It was not until 12 November that Miss Jennie Lee, the Government's spokesman in this sphere, announced her deplorable decision to contribute nothing towards the cost of preserving the manuscript in this country. It would be interesting to know the reason for this decision; it could hardly be shortage of money since L5,700 was readily available in January for the purchase of an Italian jug. The story of how the manuscript was actually saved by the initiative of a private citizen - of America - Mr George Braziller is now well known and presents a sharp contrast to the inert and futile behaviour of Miss Jennie Lee and her civil servants. The purchase of
that this will be published abroad thus enabling the copyright libraries to contribute to the cost of the manuscript when they purchase their copies.

OXFORD LIBRARIES

One of the most remarkable things lately about that remarkable institution the University of Oxford has been an increasing tendency to worry about itself. It is only a year since it burst into print in two quarto volumes ("The Franks Report") which worried about what the University was all about. Now we have a shorter stout single volume, the Report of the Committee on University Libraries. This committee collected opinions from a diversity of sources from the Council of Junior Members -- is it significant that they are listed last? -- to the sinister sounding Sub-faculty of Politics -- what subterranean intrigues were they up to?

To the outside observer a fascinating vista of book provision (and lack of it) is presented. No one knows, apparently, exactly how many books the Bodleian actually contains, until 1934 they were counted in "notional octavos", which the report informs us in its matter of fact way is "an unreal unit". Apart from esoteric snippets like this the book user gets real information from the report. We did not know that access to the stacks is willingly granted, for example, and the report reinforces in this respect a feature of the administration of the Library in recent years -- a tendency to give its readers more gratuitous information. When we joined the Library many years ago the introduction to its workings was limited to an injunction that we should not "bring into the Library or kindle therein any fire or flame". Nowadays guides for undergraduates are left around at strategic points in the reading rooms. It was while reading one of these recently that we discovered what we had often wondered about in the preceding eighteen-odd years as a user -- the precise location of the gentlemen's lavatory in the Old Schools quadrangle.

A telling section early in the report compares the book acquisition of various American universities with our own. Oxford, which comes second only to London in this country is eighth in a comparable American list. No one should miss section 66 which says "It is a national disgrace that British University libraries are so starved of money for books".

It is indeed a sign of changing times that the Bodleian should begin to feel that it ought to supplement tutorial instruction by providing subject indexes and other bibliographical aids. We think this report has some of the sanest observations on the use of computers in libraries that we have read for a long time. The idea that an effective up-to-date catalogue of the library might be produced in a very short time by this means is a heartening one to anyone who has tried to run books to ground in the present one. If the money can be provided and the staff found to do the tedious work involved this could be a major aid to scholarship. It would presumably be possible to print the catalogue and sell sets of as has been done with the British Museum catalogue, thus providing for other libraries an invaluable reference tool.

OFFSET LITHO REPRINTS

At a conference on "The book trade and libraries" held at Leicester on 14 February Mr D. Allen asked two pertinent questions in his interesting paper on book acquisition in academic libraries. How, he asked, do publishers arrive at the prices to be charged for facsimiles and reprints; why are they so expensive? And why are expensive reprints so frequently advertised, and advance orders solicited at advantageous prices only for the plan to publish to be abandoned silently months or even years later? Nobody attempted to answer these questions, yet these problems are very severe for the learned library and also affect the book collector. For us the enormous delay between announcement and ultimate publication is tiresome, but we do not have to face the problem of funds committed from one financial year to another with all the attendant difficulty this entails for the academic librarian. But we are faced with the same apparently high prices. Are these in fact inflated? It is very difficult to draw valid comparisons in this field, but it may be instructive to look at two recent examples. The facsimile edition of Horace Hart's "Earl Stanhope and the Oxford University Press" issued by the Printing Historical Society last year (and reviewed in the Winter 1966 PL) contained some 86pp. and cost £15s. to members, or a fraction over 2d. a page, which one may presumably take as a minimum cost covering materials and machining only. The Gregg/Archive reprint of Watson's "History of printing" in a rather smaller page size was offered at the pre-publication price of £2 2s., or approximately threepence three-farthings for each of its 136 pages. At the price currently being quoted by Gregg/Archive for Watson, £3 10s. or 6d. a page it would seem that they are covering their overheads very comfortably. However, although there have been at least two reprints of the most valuable part of Watson, his "Preface", in the past sixty years,
this is undoubtedly a book worth reprinting and even at its higher price not expensive if one compares with the cost of the original edition. Presumably the London firm which is currently advertising facsimile reprints of Bohn's edition of Lowndes' Bibliographer's manual at £39 knows the market price for second-hand copies and is still confident that they will find enough customers to make a profit. Caveat emptor.

**LIBRARY HISTORY**

The Library History Group of the Library Association is venturing out into publishing, and the first issue of a regular journal is rumoured to be appearing shortly. The Group's first pamphlet, *Norwich Public Library: a select bibliography* compiled by Denis F. Keeling was published late last year, price 3s., and is a useful brief list of references to one of the most venerable city libraries.

We learn from Mr John Allred of 28 Park Place, Leeds, that a Northern Division of the Group has recently been inaugurated; he invites any local history societies or individuals interested in the early development of libraries (private as well as public) in the North to contact him.

**WHY POTOCKI?**

Count Potocki of Montalk first came to my attention nearly six years ago, when his *Prison poems* published by 'The Montalk Press for the Divine Right of Kings' was included in the catalogue of the excellent exhibition of English private presses 1757-1966 held at The Times Bookshop in April 1961. At that time I was living in Trinidad, which despite its many compensations meant that I was of course unable to visit the exhibition, or to find out more about this press which intrigued me because of the cryptic note in the catalogue that 'the author was sentenced to a term in gaol as a result of information laid by the printer of some of his poems'. But the matter would probably have rested there, and the Montalk Press have faded from my mind, had I not by the purest chance happened to notice YTT YZZ 'by Count Geoffrey Potocki of Montalk' listed in *The British national bibliography* for 1961 while I was browsing through its lists of new volumes of poetry looking in a rather desultory and inefficient way for presses which ought to be recorded in PLA's *Private press books*. There was something a little odd about the BNB entry - I cannot now recollect what it was - which made me think it might be a piece of private printing. And there was certainly something very odd in the presence of the entry at all, as the imprint clearly showed that the publishers, the Mélissa Press, were at Draguignan in France. Whatever was it doing in a bibliography recording the output of British publishers?

Further investigation seemed worthwhile, particularly after I had found, by a familiar and happy process of serendipity, the account of Potocki's trial and imprisonment in Alec Craig's *The banned books of England* (2nd ed., London, Allen & Unwin, 1962, pp. 85-91). So while I was home on leave in 1962, putting in some time in the British Museum Reading Room, I took the opportunity of looking at such of Potocki's books as were listed in the *General Catalogue*. I was not as lucky as I had hoped, as several were reported to me as missing as a result of war damage, but those I managed to see impressed me. Potocki was obviously a poet of real if minor talent; in politics he had apparently moved to the extreme right wing during the thirties in the way that other antipodean writers such as Jack Lindsay had moved as far left. His publishing history seemed confused in the extreme [Rigby Graham's pioneering work in the Checklist which follows his article clears away much of the confusion but as one can see there is yet a great deal to be done]. Altogether Potocki was obviously an interesting man, and it seemed likely that the Mélissa Press which was currently issuing his work would prove to be a private press. I therefore wrote to him at Draguignan telling him that I had become interested in his work and asking if we might list his current output in *Private press books*. His reply was prompt and it was courteous.

Over the next two or three years, when I was back in the West Indies and later when I was in Nigeria we engaged in a correspondence which gradually petered out in the way such exchanges so often do. It was splendid, but always alarming to receive one of his letters as he was always free in expressing his extreme right-wing views on self-rule for the colonies, what should be done with Dr Jagan etc. and one felt that if the letters fell into the wrong hands one would find oneself unceremoniously on the next plane home. But while it lasted it was full of fascinating things. And even fuller of unanswered questions: why was Potocki's BM reader's ticket withdrawn? Why did he send spoiled copies of his books inscribed 'Good copy presented free to the University of Tokyo' to the Alexander Turnbull Library in New Zealand? Why was he blackguarded by the *Daily Worker* to the extent that he was in the forties? Did MS really arrange for his presses to be stolen during his period of 18s intermittent?

To some of these many questions I received an answer during the memorable visit to Count Potocki which Rigby Graham describes so
well in his article which follows. But many remain unanswered. There are certainly plenty of good stories about Potocki, and yet surprisingly little has appeared on him in print. Maclaren-Ross planned a chapter on him for his *Memoirs of the forties* but it was never written. To the best of my knowledge apart from Craig's chapter the articles which follow are the only serious studies of this strange figure from the literary world of the thirties and forties. Geoffrey Potocki or Władysław V, a good poet, a splendid pamphleteer, a magnificent enemy. Those collectors who are fascinated by that in many ways similar figure Fr Rolfe Baron Corvo will find the collection of Potockiana a rewarding and very much cheaper if not easier pursuit. R.C.

POTOCKI

by Rigby Graham

Along the high banked winding road from Piddletrenthide to Hazelbury Bryan, the signposts carry the most improbable names of Mappowder, Folly and Plush Bottom. It was this last place I was looking for, and here I hoped to find Władysław V of Poland, Count Potocki of Montalk. His picturesque address conjured up visions of gracious living and I was most anxious to meet this man of whom I had heard so much. The road twisted over a high ridge of land and then dropped steeply away into this lovely wooded Vale of Blackmoor. From here one looked out over the historic and splendid ridge of Bulbarrow on top of which stood the ancient British Camp of Rawlsbury Rings. The hills here are scarred with earthworks and remains.

Soon the road bent sharply to the right past a public house, The Brace of Pheasants, the elegant sign of which was a glass case containing two magnificent stuffed specimens and that seemed to be all there was of Plush. I was later to learn that Potocki invariably referred to this pub as the Brace of Peasants. I asked the way of an unshaven though helpful farmer who stuck his head through the top half of a barn door, and was told that Potocki's place was the first gateway on the right along the road. I reached a five-barred gate leaning drunkenly open, halfway up a steep slope leading into a field. Turning in before quite realising where I was, the car lurched and bounced to a shuddering halt, hub deep in a rut, beside an assortment of corrugated and asbestos sheeted huts, and a heap of brick ends, broken pipes, bits of wire, wood and old iron bars. An outburst of frenzied barking from a bevy of alsatians kennelled in an engineless old Austin reverberated across the vale. It did not seem at all likely that this could be the place, so reversing hastily to escape the noisy dogs, I started to slip and slide back down the slope. But as I passed the gatepost I noticed a small fluttering piece of paper tacked above a small wooden letter box and this bore in faded typing the legend 'The Mélissa Press'. This was the right place after all.

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As I was trying to decide whether to go forward or back, a figure strode through the gate in the wire fence. He wore a pink shirt and riding breeches and his bare feet were in sandals. Despite the incongruity of this dress in these surroundings, it was obvious before he spoke that this was the Count. Courteously and graciously I was welcomed and invited into his home. Following him through the gate I found myself in an enclosure where two gentle Jersey cows fed quietly and on the far side in front of a copse of trees stood a long low building of the kind used for deep litter chicken houses. Inside, the building was well stocked with books, cats and printing equipment. There were Siamese cats pushing up against my legs, black kittens squeaking on a bed, and a young bull calf looked pathetically in through the low window. An upright piano stood in one corner of this main room; the only other furniture beside a box or two, bookshelves and washstand, was a double bed covered with a golden bedspread. This bed it seemed also did service as table, chairs and settee. Slung from the roof were baskets in which food was hung out of cat reach, and on a small box or chest by the bed stood a jug of milk straight from the cow, still warm and frothy. This was the first I had tasted - it was unexpectedly delicious.

A thundering overhead was explained as cats playing in the roof space. Tea and bread and honey were served, the tea from a Japanese porcelain teapot on which the broken spout had been carefully replaced by a rubber anti-splash extension for a water tap. While I attempted to make sketches Count Potocki answered a series of questions which I had come so far to ask.

Just as the eighteenth century was enriched by the tremendous personality of men like John Wilkes, politician, rake and wit, so the twentieth century has seen the emergence of a man of not dissimilar temperament and vigour, Geoffrey Wladislas Vaile, Count Potocki of Montalk. The parallels which can be drawn between these two men are considerable. Potocki, like Wilkes, has polish, impeccable manners, and is a brilliant and penetrating conversationalist. His mind is viciously incisive and both he and Wilkes suffered persecution for publishing obscenity. In the case of Wilkes, his appeal fund, were Hugh Walpole, Aldous Huxley, H. G. Wells, J. B. Priestley, Walter de la Mare, Laurence Houseman, Lord Esher, T. S. Eliot and many others. The savage punishment incensed many people who felt this was little short of a travesty of justice. W. B. Yeats described it as 'criminal brutality'. A rather inaccurate account of the trial is given in The Times of Tuesday 9 February 1932.

Both Wilkes and Potocki fought against considerable odds and often alone. Because of this loneliness they have both proved themselves to have been men of singleness of purpose and of undoubted courage. As it has been difficult for ordinary people to understand them, both have been labelled eccentrics. Both loved practical jokes. Wilkes played many at Medmenham as a member of the Hellfire Club. The best known was the occasion when he dressed up a baboon in a black robe and horns and hid it in a chest in the Chapel at Medmenham. While the brothers were intoning the mock prayers in the subdued light, Wilkes opened the chest. The robed baboon leapt out and went berserk. It leapt about gibbering like some satanic agent and landed on the back of Lord Sandwich, and clung there biting and screaming. Lord Sandwich fell on his knees crying 'Spare me, gracious Devil. I am as yet but half a sinner. I never have been half so wicked as I pretended.' The acute humiliation of Sandwich and the others when the truth was discovered was more than they could live down and Wilkes was expelled. The example of the baboon has an interesting
parallel in the case of Count Potocki. In the National Socialist No. 9 April-June 1965 (which was printed for Colin Jordan by Potocki and carries his 'pilawa' made of en quads), amongst other things there is a story entitled 'Victory at Leyton'. It is an account of monkey man Gerald Lawman who dressed up as a monkey and carried a placard which said 'We immigrants are voting for Gordon Walker' – for which political joke Lawman was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Potocki himself directs his joking into the wit and sparkle of reviews etc. which he has reprinted of his own work. Wilkes was a brilliant scholar of Greek and Latin as also is Potocki, and both also bear a decided leaning towards amorous adventures. Perhaps the only obvious way in which they differ is in physical characteristics. Wilkes, with his hideous appearance, squinting eyes, heavy jowl and twisted mouth used to say 'that it took me only half an hour to talk away my face'. Potocki on the other hand, has always been handsome, aristocratic and distinguished-looking. This is clearly shown in the portrait sketch of him by Jadwiga Walker, drawn in 1945 and used as a frontispiece to Mel Meum, which shows him in his early forties. His aquiline nose, clear sharp eyes, determined chin, high domed forehead and long hair make him a striking looking man, giving the impression of a much younger person than he in fact is. Born in 1903, the son of an architect who declined to use his title, he speaks little and that disparagingly of his childhood and youth in New Zealand, and apart from the fact that in 1927 he published a volume of poems, little has been written of his activities at that time. In 1928 he came to England and in a contemporary newspaper report he is referred to as 'a poet from New Zealand who has only been a few months in England'. This same account describes the occasion when Potocki and his companions were refused service in a restaurant because they were wearing grey silk shirts, grey trousers and no coats. He left this country again however after completing his prison sentence to live in Provence, at Vence, and also in Poland and did not return here until 1935. During his stay in Poland he printed what he says was probably the first poem in English ever to be printed there, a poem which the Count describes as 'a jolly good sonnet about the relief of Vienna at which six Counts Potocki fought'. He returned to England in 1935 to attend the King's Jubilee, although, as he says, as things turned out for him this event paled into insignificance with the murder of Pilsudski on 12 May 1935. It was about this time that he made his first venture into printing in England, when after a meeting with Aldous Huxley, Huxley and Brian Guiness bought

A pen drawing of Count Potocki made by Jadwiga Walker at the Ognisko Polskie in London 1945.

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Potocki a small press so that he might publish his Right Review. The
first number was published in 1936, and over the next eleven years he
published seventeen numbers. He writes on one occasion, 'I printed
this paper in unbelievably miserable circumstances, and without almost
everything one should have, including often sixpence to put in the
electric light meter.' As well as containing reviews of books, and con-
certs, wood cuts, and poems by Potocki and other poets, many portions
of the Right Review are autobiographical. The design of these pamphlets
has a distinct period flavour, the printing and production are appalling,
they have to be seen to be believed. The content however is lively,
stimulating and provocative. Count Potocki in his Foreword to his
reprint of Charles Maurras' Music Within Me describes the difficulties
of his early printing—'We were still using the old proto-Adana, which
could scarcely be called a printing press at all, and upon which it was
quite impossible to do good printing.' Of the Right Review, Charles
Maurras wrote in the Action François, 6 November 1939: '... J'ai
admis personnellement avec quelle vérité élégante et précise, qui en
serrait le sens et aussi la ligne du rythme, un très grand nombre de mes
vers ont été traduits dans the Right Review en ces derniers temps'.

An interesting account of Potocki appeared in one London newspaper
of 14 January 1939: '... If I could have a plebiscite I could become
King of Poland' says the Count to me, 'or if I had £500 a year...'
The Count is one of London's characters these ten years. He wears a
blood-red gown, sandals and a headpiece like a beret. His brown hair,
long as an old-fashioned girl's, reaches nearly to his waist. When I ask
him why he wears the outfit he says, 'It is simple renaissance dress, such
as Chaucer and Dante wore. It is royal purple which is not really
purple but crimson, because my Polish ancestors were all "crimson"
nobles as distinct from petty or "grey" nobles.'... He is a Bloomsbury
character. He gives the Roman salute to his friends and the com-
missionaires at the Reading Room of the British Museum, where he
is often to be found. He is a poet, amateur astrologer and editor of the
Right Review an 'intellectual counterblast to Bolshevism'. He prints the
Review on a press in his kitchen at 39, Lamb's Conduit St., W.C.1.
'I proved that a decadent aristocrat could learn the craft of printing',
he says. He sets the type by hand. 'Democracy must be destroyed'
he writes in one of his editorials.

'I call on the Count who receives me in his bedroom, wearing a
crimson, wide sleeved house gown. His bed has his crest painted at its
head. Another gown of gold and crimson is flung over the bedhead.
I say my prayers in that,' he says. 'Are you a Catholic?' I ask. 'Cer-
tainly not,' he says. 'I am a Pagan. I pray to Apollo.' There is a fine
arrogance about him. He can carry his long hair and his robe. 'I am
one of England's major poets,' he says. 'I am as good as, say, Byron.
I have never said that I compare with Shakespeare. He is above us all!'

Potocki had considerable difficulties with printing presses, difficulties
which would have discouraged all but the bravest and the most tena-
Potocki keenly aware of the limitations of his own printing says that 'it is true that in 1938, 1939 and part of 1940 and from mid-1942-1948 I had an ever improving printing plant.' But he was concerned mainly with what he describes as 'resisting democratocratic tyranny, printing stuff concerned with 188 and the Martyrs of Katyn . . .

In a recent letter to me (28:9:66) he writes 'At Bookham I tried to print on one of those ridiculous cylinder things, with slots, but it was hopeless. Then thank goodness my Father died, which made me the head of the Family and put some money into my hands from a settlement. I bought a new press, a Crown Folio Harrild Platen, and had power fitted to it. Besides the things you mention, I printed a lot of advertisements, i.e. for customers, a series of pamphlets for the 188 Dependents' Fund, i.e. the British Union of Fascists, a pamphlet for some Hindus, etc., also a long poem for one Marie Carmichael Stopes.'

He has continued jobbing printing up to the present time and among some bits and pieces I have before me are cake shop advertisements, The National Socialist (the last I believe before his recent fracas with Colin Jordan) and a card for the 'Chaff Promotion Society'. In any case, unlike so many private press enthusiasts who are primarily or indeed often concerned only with how they print rather than what they print, when it comes to the Melissa Press publications, as opposed to hack printing, Count Potocki is concerned very much with what he prints. In his Foreword to Music Within Me he wrote: ' . . . the French who, unlike the English, have too much sense to judge a poem by the price of the printing machine used to print it, at once responded with the most glowing praise of the translations . . .'.

His press in Dorset is an ancient demy folio which stands right up to the sloping ceiling of his little press room. There are shelves all round, and between the windows, and these are packed with all the paraphernalia common to those who practise this ancient craft - tins, canisters, bottles, jars, packets of paper, boxes, containing all the bits and pieces so necessary for the continuance of this trade. His trays of type are on a low bench and he himself has to sit low down under the slope of the roof to compose. His type is mainly Garamond in various sizes - Roman and Italic, and he also has most of the sorts necessary for Polish, French, German, etc. (though sometimes accents are added by hand), and also some Greek. He also uses on occasion, en quads and other spacing materials which he builds up to type high and prints his 'pilewa' from these, a trick he developed many years ago when trying to print swastikas. He sets quickly and carelessly and it is understandable.
that the odd wrong fount creeps in, italic into Roman and vice versa. If he is careless at the setting and proofing end, his respect for language is such that he is scrupulously careful when it comes to literals in the finished job. Many of his books and pamphlets carry corrigenda—placed prominently and printed in the book—not on a slip of paper to be tucked in apogetically. Some of his productions are carefully and laboriously corrected with a pen. My copy of the slim pamphlet, *A Tourist's Rome* by Richard Aldington, carries twenty-two such amendments. Count Potocki has printed fairly regularly from 1934 onwards Poems for the Feast of Saturn. These were popular and one in particular he mentions in a letter—*The Gentle Wine of Flattery* 1935, the first one he printed himself—as being the 'one which Caitlin Thomas (then Macnamara, later the wife of Dylan Thomas) complained Augustus John had made her read aloud 33 times'.

The Count has also produced surrealist poems, the first of which, YTT YZZ, went out of print very quickly, bought up by Potocki believes because of a review which he claims was by Dr Lazar Wankoff in the *Literamaya Glupiaya* of Omsk, which Count Potocki subsequently reprinted. As a result of this he announces in *A New Dorset Worthy*, . . . our next surrealist poem *Lolita's Lolly* will be charged for by the metric system' (an interesting comparison with Rolf Hennequel of the Wattle Grove Press—because most of his custom is by post sells his books by weight)' five centimes the square centimetre, overall measurement. This will work out at about eight shillings, but it will be worth it, on account of the high erotoxicogen value'. However, in *The King of Poland's Plan for Rhodesia 1966* (published from Draguignan) Count Potocki announces 'We regret that we are unable to supply *Lolita's Lolly*, which was to have been sold at 8.27 francs per square centimetre (160 times the earlier advertised price), the whole edition having been bought up by a Negro bookseller in Selma, Alabama.'

Count Potocki printed a variety of articles, poems and translations between the years of 1935 and 1948, from a variety of obscure addresses. In January 1946 he was evicted from an address in Islington and declared his intention of travelling to Ireland, but it is not known whether he actually went there. According to his own account however he did go abroad again in August 1948 to Bari in Italy and on his return to England, he sold the press and emigrated to Draguignan. He undertook a variety of articles, Christmas cards and poetry at Draguignan, returning to Dorset in the early 1960's. Here he was soon to settle in Lovelace's Copse, among the wooded slopes of Dorset, with his daughter and a variety of animals. It was here that I finally ran him to earth and he kindly did his best to answer my many questions. My last picture, on a subsequent visit, of the 'Monarch of the Madhouse in the Mud' as Colin Jordan once called him, was of Count Potocki, Roderick Cave and myself struggling for three-quarters of an hour, up over our ankles in mud, desperately trying to free my car from the morass into which it had sunk during the hours we had been there. We put brick ends, pieces of wood, old sacks into the slimy ruts and under the wheels, trying to give them something on which to grip. As the front wheels spun, hissed and burnt we were splattered—our clothes and faces thickened and grey. Eventually the Count harnessed his little Citroen (476cc. complete with French, Polish and English nationality plates) with a coil of wire to my front bumper on the Morris. I thought if it tears the bumper off it will be worth it to get out of this mess. The little Citroen pulled valiantly against it would seem incredible odds. The wire tautened and broke, and twanged into my windscreen, but the car had moved sufficiently to get a grip. We were away, and as I looked back I saw Count Potocki in his wide skirted green tweed coat, knee breeches and clogs, smiling and waving before striding back to his printing press. I always recall this picture of the Count when I read his own description of himself in *A New Dorset* Spring 1967.
I have installed a printing plant in Dorset. I am writing and translating here, I own a couple of cows and a bit of land in the county, and can show over 150 descents from the First Marquess of Dorset (grandson of Edward III) which I propose shortly to set out in print. Moreover as my name will be stuck up all over Dorset after I am dead (and tourists duly charged for it) it is only fair to me that it should be publicized a bit while I am still here. I do not claim to be as good a Poet as William Shakespear, but he had nothing to do with Dorset anyway and I am a good deal more like him than anyone whose voice has been heard on the BBC during its disgraceful existence. It is true that I am opposed to virtually every movement or line of thought triumphant at the moment, but does not the fearsome and uncertain state of the world show that I am right in this? Besides, no genius was ever born to advertise the successful follies of the time: a genius always has something genuinely new and newly genuine and this is why he usually has a lot of trouble.’

Since completing this account, however, the Count has returned to the Villa Vigoni at Draguignan, where he continues to print and on occasions to write informative and lively letters to the many friends he has left behind. Since returning to France he has published The King of Poland’s Plan for Rhodesia and The Blood Royal – the latter as staggering and lively a piece of genealogy as one is ever likely to encounter. The bulk of The Blood Royal was in fact printed by the Count in Plush but published from Draguignan. At present he is printing his own translations from Petöfi, more poems, and I am sure more vituperative attacks on those who annoy him.

POEM FOR THE FEAST OF SATURN MCMLXV

Watching the wheels and levers of my press,
watching its moving surfaces and bands
after this lapse of time no man can guess
what printer took it from the maker’s hands.
How many made their living from it, or
how many failed, how many flourished well
and grew to have a richly-furnished floor
full of machines, no person now can tell.
What nonsense or what wisdom has been spread
or dull shop-keeper’s rubbish, by your ink
laid with the toil of printers long since dead,
what good or harmful notions, none can think.
That you should print the truths destined to change
the distant future, none could foresee this thing
nor that your poetry and prose should range
o’er myriad matters, wielded by a king.

Count Potocki of Montalk
Private printers fall into two categories: those who have nothing of their own to say but who have a pedantic concern for precious printing; and those who have something to shout about but who are quite unconcerned about appearances. At first sight, Count Potocki of Mонтalk would appear to be the doyen of the latter breed.

In the Postscript to Mel Meum he asks: 'Would the Guido Morrises* of this world kindly note before making their sneering little remarks, that we are still short of spacing material etc., which is unbelievably difficult to procure nearer than Lyons: and have therefore not been able to use the traditional four mis(sic) in the corners of the chase while gradually adjusting the platen. Hon, Clients can be assured that our printing will improve, which Guido's cannot, seeing it is already purfekt, . . . !'

These words were printed in September 1939, well over a quarter of a century since his first efforts, and later editions exhibit little or nothing of the promised improvement.

Those familiar with his output would be astounded by change or improvement, for the typographic standards which he apparently finds adequate for the expression of his ideas (and who is to say that they are not?) have remained at a surprisingly static level throughout his career. The greatest variable is the standard of presswork, and this he thoughtfully varies from forme to forme to provide the range of tone and texture which aficionados have come to expect. This procedure is generally sufficient to disguise the utilisation of Monotype Garamond, machine and handset, and Linotype Garamond within the same pamphlet, as in A Tourist's Rome by Richard Aldington. Mr David Chambers is to be commended on this discovery, which adds a new dimension to the narrow range of Potocki studies.

If his approach to typography is summarised by his catch phrase: 'Badly printed, well written' (Whited Sepulchres), then there would be little point in cataloguing his errors and shortcomings, except perhaps in order to give him the offence on which he apparently thrives. Why should one pay more attention to his heedless style than to that of any other in the distinguished line of free thinking or scurrilous pamphleteers?

*An article on Guido Morris and the Latin Press is in preparation for The Private Library.

THE TYPOGRAPHY OF POTOCKI

BY DR ORPHEUS

A TENTATIVE CHECKLIST

OF THE WORK OF GEOFFREY COUNT POTOCKI

compiled by Rigby Graham

1923

The Opal Studded Diadem, Auckland, New Zealand. A leaflet of romantic poems.

1927

Wild Oats - a sheaf of poems. Published by Clifton, Sumner in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Surprising Songs. An Odyssean tale in poetry. Of Surprising Songs Dr Zbigniew Grabowski wrote in Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzieny (Krakow): 'In the sum of these poems, written with eminent mastery and craftsmanship . . . and immense economy of words, there is no lack of declarations of love nor of confession of faith in life. His erotic poems are lit through with thoughtfulness . . . not blared pastels, but decided sweeps, revealing everywhere a tendency towards synthesis alike in image as in thought. He enriches English poetry with his own valuable qualities, as much in imagery as in command of words.' Against Cresswell, Mонтalk Press, Maidment Press, 2 New Kings Road, S.W.6. This was written 4 a.m. 12 June 1910. It was issued as 'Incidents in New Zealand History II. Against Cresswell.' Count Potocki has no knowledge or memory of I or any later volumes.

1931

Laddly Lovesongs, Columbia Press, Poem for Christmas (Feast of Saturn), Blue Moon Press, London.

Here Lies Sir John P. . . . [Published by a friend without Potocki's knowledge or consent]. Cray's Lane, Blue Moon Press.

Snobbery with Violence (A Poet in Gaol). A Here and Now Pamphlet, Wishart Press. Of this book Aldous Huxley was to write: 'I think it a very interesting and at the same time, spirited and well written account of prison life as it appears to a man of intelligence and sensibility.'

1933

Here in Vienna when King John Came Down, Warsaw.

Prison Poems, Mонтalk Press. For the Divine Right of Kings.

1934

Erotic Images, Warsaw.

1935

I Have Been Well Nigh Silenced by My Poet (Poem for the Feast of Saturn), London.

The Gentle Wine of Flattery. Poem for the Feast of Saturn. The first he printed himself for the Right Review.

Whited Sepulchres, the Right Review. 'Being an account of my trial and imprisonment for a parody of Verlaine and some other verses.'

The Right Review (from 1936 to 1947). Seventeen issues and a number of political pamphlets. The official Organ of the Royal House of Poland. It was

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founded in 1936 and was published 'as often as democratic oppression allows of.' It was described in The Criterion, 1 Jan. 1939, as being 'the only uncompromisingly right review in this country.'

The Unconstitutional Crisis. On the constitutional crises preceding the abdication of Edward VIII. This was printed and published on the day of the abdication itself. It was limited to twenty signed copies and was offered for sale at £1 15. od. each. Count Potocki in a letter to me from Draguignan (28. ix. 66) writes: 'I and Nigel Heschule in the honour of being in the lockup over it. I think it is called Cannon Row, anyway the one just off Whitehall. The only other person, except drunk, who was inside over it, was as far as I know, Dunlop.'

1937
Abdication of the Son. Saturn Poem. The title poem of a booklet he later printed (1938).

1938
Abdication of the son.
Oh Starry Gods who shone o'er Greece of old. Right Review.
Maurras Poems. No definite trace can be found of the actual date of this first edition, but it must have appeared about this time for on 13 April 1939, the critic, Orion, writing in L'Action Française said: 'Le comte Potocki a traduit ces poèmes, vers par vers, en verse de même mesure que les originaux et rimes, qui transpercent dans la langue anglaise, beaucoup mieux qu'on n'eût roulé croise possible, le sens, le son, le rythme des strophes de Charles Maurras et en donnent un équivalent incroyablement fidèle.'

1939
Social Climbers in Bloomsbury. Done from the Life. Right Review. This book was described as 'a scathing and amusing satire on the people you hate, Joad, Ellen Wilkinson and the like.' Of this Ruthven Todd in a letter to Anthony Baker writes: '... That lunatic Geoffrey Potocki (born, I think, Smith, the son of a milkman in New Zealand), who called himself Count Potocki of Montalk, and then, later King Geoffrey I of Poland and actually got some support from the Free Poles, or a section of them, ran a press. This was called the Right Review Press, and put out some odd badly produced things, including a book called Social Climbers in Bloomsbury in which I appear as Driven Mud. I had offended the royal presence and was too amused to think of a libel action.'

Christ was Apollo in his Weakest While. Saturn Poem. Right Review. Written in Stare Lazy in Poland.

1942
Forefathers. Part I. Translated from the Polish of Michiewicz.

1943
Forefathers. Part II.

1945
His Majesty Władysław the Fifth... to his Britannic Majesty's House of Lords... (a petition). 'Started printing the Saturn poems again, wishing a Merry Christmas to all men of good will and especially to William Joyce, holder of the

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Kriegsverdienstkreuz, – Petition to the King of Kings, printed on card from the Polish Ministry of Education.'

1946
North and South from the Wood. A new book of poems by Siegfried Robert with a foreword by Potocki.
Forefathers, Part III. Translated from the Polish of Michiewicz, in four booklets.

1947
A Lesson in Magic, offered for sale at £1 or 2 Polish złote.— 'It brought the authorities to heel. I got my ration books back, plus identity card all with my title which is what the dispute was about.'

Saturn Poem. Two lines from Florus dedicated to Our Hungarians.

1948
Two Manifestos in Polish in Gill because this was the only type for which he had Polish accents.

Saturn Poem. As yet untraced.

1950
Saturn Poem, Friends and Friends. 'A poem written in the train from Bookham to London 20-2-44, references to the wanton betrayal of Poland which took place at that time.'

1956
Caes diecze, we wszechswiat ujedn. Written in London in 1947, printed for him in Draguignan.

1957
Nad woda zielona czarodziej stoi. Printed in red ink in Draguignan.

1958
Apollo. In Greek letters cut by Potocki in wood and printed on a lawyer's copying press.

1959
Mel Meum.
Christmas is sung. On the Marinou.
Music is Immortal.
Counterpoint. Out of Mel Meum, this was in fact the first Mélissa Press Publication.

A Drap of Reading for Wc Chatlcar MacBishop.

1960
YTT ZYJZ czyli – JAK WIERSZ POWSTAÆE. Described as 'the first surrealist poem to be issued by this anti surrealist press: as such it is offered to bibliophiles and bibliophiles at the prices hereinafter set out. But the surrealists need not imagine that they have heard the end of the matter, for We have several more surrealist poems down our sleeve and the worst is, an exegis will follow. They suggested it themselves. Tariff post free to Japanese 3d., to Hungarians, Buls, Germans, Eighteen Bees, and sexy women 6d., otherwise 1/6d.'

The Fifth Columnist. A Short Story by Jim Goodlewood (Count Potocki of Montalk). Draguignan.

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to stand by and watch others demonstrate examples to him, when so much of the appeal of this peculiar art lies in physical contact and the pleasure of seeing the paintings appear and vanish under the pressure of one’s own fingers. He deals understandably enough but splendidly nevertheless with the Edwardses of Halifax, the origins of this curious ‘vanishing’ art, imitators and amateurs, and with the 20th century fore-edge decorations. The scholarly research is evident but not obtrusive, the whole is presented with humility, love and reverence for the subject which many might well emulate. He quotes and corrects earlier and best researchers now so obviously inaccurate or slipshod, and corrects earlier and now so obviously inaccurate or slipshod researchers with kindliness. $20 may seem a high price but the book is very well written and fairly well produced – it is a considerable asset to any bibliographic bookshelf, a godsend to those unfortunate enough not to have the earlier volume, while those who have the first will need no persuasion to add this second.

The book is written with wit and gentleness and Weber’s comments are cryptic and reveal a wide knowledge of the byways of this curious craft and the fashions and influences which played so large a part in its development.

It saddens and infuriates me, as it must do so many, when one realizes too late alas that so many examples of our rich heritage have disappeared forever from these shores. But in the case of these fore-edges and the bindings of craftsmen like the Edwardses and other practitioners of this mysterious craft it is more than reassuring and heartening to know that there are men like Weber who understand and love these strange, ingenious and curious embellishments.

From a production point of view, there are one or two factors which detract from the volume. The difference between the reproduction of the frontispiece and the dustwrapper is so great that one immediately doubts the quality of the other colour reproductions contained in the book. When one compares for instance the colour plates of the ‘white towered castle’ on the Taylor-and-Hessey Anthology (Edinburgh 1810) – opposite page 111 in the present volume with that opposite page 85 in the earlier, or the reproduction opposite page 207 in this book with the frontispiece in the earlier, one’s suspicion is more than confirmed. These colour plates only give the haziest suggestion of what the colour of the originals may be like. Finally, the taste and appropriateness of the designs of Edwards of Halifax where the decoration on the cover reflected the period and the age in which it was produced, the decorative treatment employed bearing some relevance to what was between the covers, has not extended to the designer of this book. The use of Saphir on the front and spine of the wrapper on glossy art paper is one thing, whereas to use it for gold stamping on the buckram case is singularly inappropriate, for it lends an impressiveness on which its decorative qualities so much depended. Weber’s earlier volume with its venetian red lettering piece was in this respect so much the more refined and tasteful.

R.G.


This volume is a collection of extracts from the writings of forty-nine librarians and library benefactors of the past, most of them British. Each extract has a short biographical introduction by the editor.

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Library history is of little appeal to the general public, but the cordial reception given by the general reviewing journals to Raymond Irwin's *The English library and The Heritage of the English library* suggests that library history can be made interesting to at least a small number of people outside the library profession, provided that it is written by an author with wide historical knowledge and some literary skill. Mr Thornton's book is not an anthology of writings on library history. It is a collection of essays and extracts from books which have now become of historical interest. Neither the professional librarian nor the layman will be completely satisfied with it, but that is no fault of Mr Thornton. Some of the greatest librarians wrote little or nothing; others wrote in such a pedestrian style that they can be read only out of interest in the topics they discuss. Having made this reservation, I am glad to say that the non-librarian members of the Private Libraries Association are likely to find more of interest to them in this volume than they may suppose.

A few of the authors will be familiar, at least by name, e.g., Richard de Bury, Sir Thomas Bodley, William Blades, Richard Garnett and H. B. Wheatley. What of the others? I particularly recommend attention to John Durie, author of *The Reformed librarie-keeper*, to the learned Gabriel Naudé, whose *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* is one of the few undoubted classics of library literature, to the Rev. James Kirkwood, vigorously expounding his ambitious scheme for parochial libraries in Scotland, to William Brown, blandly optimistic about the future of 'itinerating libraries', which had been pioneered by his brother Samuel in East Lothian, to Henry Bradshaw, the great librarian of Cambridge University Library, speaking on the libraries of Cambridge, to Stanley Jast, for his truly humorous paper on 'The perfect librarian' and to Arundell Esdaile and Berwick Sayers, recalling how they first became interested in books and libraries. Oddly one of the most interesting contributions is from a librarian now little remembered, namely, Thomas Mason, represented by his fascinating biographical study of the unfortunate Dr Robert Watt, who sacrificed his health and ruined himself and his family in the compilation of his famous bibliography, the *Bibliotheca Britannica*.

J.G.O.


This is the second volume to appear in a series of studies of the history of the British Museum collections known as the *British Museum bicentenary publications*. The first appeared ten years ago and one wonders whether the series will be complete by the tercentenary, now only eighty seven years away; there is certainly plenty of work to be done.

Symonds D'Ewes was born in Dorset and spent much of his early life in Bury St. Edmunds, but after Cambridge he gravitated to London and was studying law at the Middle Temple by 1620. He eventually took up the study of history rather than law, not being under the necessity of earning his living. He was afflicted with that mild eccentricity for tracing his ancestors which has obsessed so many antiquaries and book collectors. They were of continental origin and, D'Ewes liked to think, of noble descent. Whatever their antecedents, his immediate progenitor had provided him with sufficient resources to pursue his book collecting interests and in 1626 he married an heiress of suitable pedigree and was knighted in the same year, becoming a baronet in 1641. He became an M.P. in 1640, at first with some success owing to his historical knowledge, but his humourless pedantry proved too much even for his contemporaries. He fell into neglect and was eventually removed from Parliament by Pride's Purge in 1648. He died in 1650.

D'Ewes's serious collecting dated from the sixteen twenties when there were still good opportunities for collectors of manuscripts in spite of what had disappeared into the great collections after the Dissolution. The library was principally history, theology, law and classics. In discussing its purpose Mr Watson gives us an interesting concise note on the facilities available to scholars in the libraries of the period; they were few.

The most important part of the collection was the manuscripts and part of the pleasure which D'Ewes derived as a collector can be seen in the title pages which he wrote for some of them. He was also not above breaking out leaves occasionally. Mr Watson records Wanley's censure on him for this.

After the collector's death the library remained in the family, largely unappreciated it appears until 1705 when it was bought by Robert Harley. Some interesting correspondence between Wanley, D'Ewes and Harley is printed relating to this episode. The printed books were absorbed into the Harleian Library and, except for six, had no recorded survival of the sale to Osborne. The manuscripts, charts and rolls went to the British Museum with the rest of Harley's manuscripts and it has been Mr Watson's task to distinguish which they are. For this he has used a number of surviving lists, only two of them D'Ewes's own and the greater part of the book consists of this catalogue, the separate sequences being carefully cross-referenced and indexed.

The printing of the book is slightly marred by a pale grey impression on some pages (v and 39 for example in the copy examined). Otherwise a pleasing standard of production has been maintained. The maroon buckram casing with D'Ewes's arms on the front cover contrasts well with grey end papers to give the volume an attractive appearance.

G.W.


The production of a volume of bibliographical essays of the greatest living incunableblist needs no review in the sense that most books are noticed in these columns. Ever since he joined the staff of the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum in 1954—and despite his official retirement in 1944—Dr Scholderer has mapped the path sketched out by Robert Proctor who had died in a climbing accident the previous year. Proctor laid the foundations, but Pollard and Scholderer erected the structure of the British Museum's *Catalogue of fifteenth century books* and of its *Short-title catalogues*. A happy by-product of his official activities has been the steady stream of over two hundred articles,
reviews and bibliographical notes on kindred topics. Scholderer always writes well, and though he lacks Curt Bühler's marvellous ability to breathe life into the most esoteric and apparently dull lines of research, his essays seldom lack interest or fail to reveal his own enthusiasm for the subject.

This volume contains those essays which the author considers most worthy of preservation. They contain much that one would wish, though one is inevitably greedy for more, and it is very convenient to have them assembled together in one volume instead of scattered in the files of the Gutenberg-Jahrbuch. The Library and elsewhere. The production of the volume is excellent, the figures being well produced and the text clear and easy on the eye, and the binding as workmanlike as it is aesthetically satisfying. One's only complaint is the indexes which could usefully have been much fuller; but it is a handsome production of a worthy text.


This book is a result, we are told, of ten years study. It comes at the end of a long line of books, and an even greater number of catalogues, on art nouveau, most of which have appeared during these very years. Amongst these have been Robert Schmutzler's splendid Art Nouveau, 1964 and Mario Amaya's lively introduction to the subject, Dutton Vista, 1966.

The sad result is that so much of what is dealt with by Mr Taylor, for instance the pre-Raphaels and William Morris, has already been covered more adequately and so frequently elsewhere. The illustrations chosen to support the text appear to be a somewhat arbitrary selection and the supplement of examples of private press types little more than space filling. Like many an enthusiast Mr Taylor has attempted to stretch his subject rather further than it will comfortably go.

Unfortunately, the most striking feature of the whole book is the way in which its designer betrays his ignorance of the period. The production is a hopeless muddle. The book is type-set in Monotype Erhardt with headings in Cooper Black—not a particularly sensitive choice or combination for a book dealing with this period.

The asymmetrical measure and the usual affectations such as the typographic ornament used as paragraph marks gives a very unpleasant spotty appearance to the book, which is complemented by the white gaps of the word spacing which is atrocious throughout. The book is badly printed on good quality cartridge. The five colour printings (there may well be more) are a complete waste. This does not add to the reproductions of the originals, rather it detracts from them, and the captions in the second colour are pointless. In fact the cost of the book seems to have been forced up by the multiple colour printing from which the reader derives no benefit.

The inner margins are very wide—a current fashion particularly in the art catalogue and the coffee-table-book field. In Mr Taylor's book, however, some of this space has been used to include reproductions, many of which have been forced most uncomfortably right into the gutter.

The Private Library

In all this is an expensive and unworthy production of a fairly scholarly but uninspired book. Those who know about this subject are very unlikely to want to buy this book and those who don't, won't.

R.G.


Mr Thornton's book, first published in 1949, now appears in a greatly enlarged edition. It bears the subtitle 'A study of bibliography and the book trade in relation to the medical sciences.' In a short introduction the distinguished medical bibliographer Sir Geoffrey Keynes points out that there are several methods of presenting medical history to the student. At opposite extremes he places the 'unreadable' works, such as Garrison and Morton's Medical bibliography, and 'readable' books, of which there are many, a recent example being Dr D. Guthrie's History of medicine (1st ed. 1945). Others, including Mr Thornton's book, place in an intermediate category, as 'partially' and 'semi-readable'. A book of this latter type, he suggests, taken up by a student in search of enlightenment on a particular subject, may tempt him to turn over the pages and absorb more of the history. This seems fair comment on Mr Thornton's book, for it is certainly not one to be read straight through without risking mental indigestion; on the other hand, opened almost anywhere, the reader interested in the history of medicine and allied sciences will find something to entertain or instruct him.

Approximately half the book, the first six chapters, describe medical books and the history of medicine chronologically, from the period before the invention of printing until the nineteenth century. The later chapters deal successively with the rise of medical societies, the growth of periodical medical literature, medical libraries, both private and institutional, and medical publishing and bookselling. Finally there is a fifty page bibliography of literature on the history of medicine, and an extensive index.

Sir Geoffrey Keynes points out that the compiler of a book such as this must be eclectic, and its author, as Librarian at St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College, can be assumed to be qualified in this respect. One minor criticism may perhaps be made. Rather more emphasis might have been placed on the value of studying the catalogues of the more prominent antiquarian booksellers specialising in old medical books, which are often a source of bibliographical and other information valuable to a collector. At the same time one can sympathise with Mr Thornton's lament that the attraction of some of the more elegant of these catalogues is diminished after studying the prices asked for the rarities listed.

The fact that a second edition of this book has been called for indicates the demand for such a work, and it undoubtedly provides a rich mine of information for students on the history of medicine, and collectors of books on the subject.

V.A.E.

Spring 1967
The name of John Roberts Press is well known to collectors of fine editions and pristine printed books. Their production in the twenty-guinea market, "a sort of Songs of Songs to the tune of 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 brochure printed for their friends may expect interested cooperation from John Roberts Press Ltd, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1.