

The World of Rare Books

By FREDERICK M. HOPKINS

HUNTING BIG GAME

VERY few booksellers in a generation have the distinction of owning a copy of the Gutenberg Bible, the first book to be printed from movable type. The appearance of a copy in the book market is an event in which collectors the world over are interested. The story of the experience of Edward Goldston, a London bookseller, who went book hunting and brought this greatest of all books home, is told in a personal letter from which we print the following paragraphs:

"On the 6th day of July I first heard that a Gutenberg Bible was in the market and I expected to see it in Cologne. The next morning I left London and on reaching Cologne was surprised to hear that I had still another day's journey to make before I could see it. I made up my mind to go after it, and next day went to Vienna where I heard that it was still forty miles away at the Melk Monastery.

"As soon as I arrived at the monastery I inspected the book and determined at all costs to possess it. The price demanded was high, but considering the beauty and rarity of the book, I at once fixed the contract price and left for London to make the arrangements about the cash. Fortunately this was not a difficult matter and after only a few hours in London I left again for Vienna. Within a fortnight I was back again in London with the two volumes of the Gutenberg Bible in my possession.

"The copy belonged to the famous Melk Monastery where it has been treasured for 300 years and is still clean and in perfect condition, and is fully described in Schwenke's supplementary volume to the 'Gutenberg 42 Line Bibles' published by Insel Verlag of Leipzig. Several difficulties presented themselves on account of the authorities in Vienna not wishing to let the copy leave the country as it was much better than the one in the Vienna National Library, with which I compared my copy page for page. However, I succeeded in carrying my treasure home and am the proud possessor of the one book in the world which a real bookseller would like most to own.

"A peculiarity of my various journeys

across the continent was the way I was pursued by the lucky number 13. On four occasions my sleeping berth was No. 13, and I landed in London after my first trip on Monday July 13, with 113 shillings in silver in my pockets and I noticed also that my German visa was dated to expire on the 13th. On the 13th I paid a solicitor in Cologne for a contract with regard to the Bible and his receipt was written on the back of a sheet torn from a calendar which was dated the 13th. Curiously enough the copy of the Bible now in my possession is one of 13 known complete copies in the world, the others being I believe all in national libraries."

It will be many a day before a bookseller has a more interesting adventure to tell in the hunt for big game in the rare book world.

AMY LOWELL AS COLLECTOR.

IN the current number of *The Book Collector's Quarterly* Ernest Dressel North tells of nearly thirty years' acquaintance with Amy Lowell as a patron of his bookshop. From this article we take the following paragraphs:

"It was in a spacious, well-lit parlor in the Hotel Vendome, Boston, in the winter of 1895, that I first met Amy Lowell. She was just about twenty years of age with fresh complexion and brilliant eyes. Her knowledge at that time was vast and positive. The only book that I recall selling was a first edition of Dickens' 'Pickwick Papers.'"

"I made three other visits to her delightful home at Brookline, each time to have a cup of tea and sit before an open fire with a blazing welcome to talk about autographs, books, and authors. Her reading and her knowledge covered a vast range. Her knowledge of her own wants was very positive. I recall many instances when she refused books and autographs not because they were too costly but because they were only 'near great.'"

"Among the notable English and American authors that she collected were the following: Arnold, Bronte, Browning, Dickens, Eliot, Goldsmith, Hardy, Hawthorne, Hunt, Keats, Kingsley, Kipling, Lamb, Landor, Rossetti, Tennyson, and

Wordsworth. Among the noted foreign writers: Balzac, Barbey, Beraldi, Coppée, de Musset, Fenelon, Goethe, Huysmans, Pascal, Rousseau, Verlaine, and Voltaire.

"Among her most prized treasures was the original manuscript of Charles Lamb's well known essay, 'Grace Before Meat' written on eight pages folio which was sent to the *London Magazine* in 1821, signed 'Elia' in three places and addressed to Messrs. Taylor & Hessey. This she used to show with keen delight to her visitors."

THE MUSEE BALZAC SAVED.

FROM Paris comes the report that the house in which Balzac lived at 47 Rue Raynouard, Passy, at the French Capital, from 1842 to 1848 and in which he wrote many novels, including "Cousin Betty," "Cousin Pons" and "Mercedet," has been saved from destruction by a New York bookseller, Gabriel Wells. In recent years the house was filled with mementoes of the French novelist, and has been maintained as the Musée Balzac by the Société Honoré de Balzac, but as the society did not feel able to buy and preserve it, its owners had decided that it must be removed to make room for improvements.

Gabriel Wells, who has been spending some weeks in Paris, learned of the danger of losing the Musée Balzac and at once, so it is said, subscribed 50,000 francs to buy the building, at the same time informing the society that it could draw upon him for a larger sum if necessary to acquire the property. His action aroused great enthusiasm among French collectors and literary men. André Chancier, treasurer of the Balzac Society, said: "The action of Mr. Wells in leaping—that is the appropriate word—to the rescue of the house of Balzac is a very handsome one, and the entire world of French letters appreciates it at its true value. But for us, the Balzacs, so numerous in the land of France and on the young soil of the United States and throughout the world, what will not be our appreciation?"

NOTE AND COMMENT.

THE first edition of the poems of Edna Dean Proctor will be published by Houghton Mifflin Company this Fall.

A bibliography of the first editions of the works of Maurice Baring by Leslie Chaundry has just been published by Durlau and Co., Ltd., of London. Desmond

MacCarthy writes an introduction. The edition is limited to 250 copies.

Daniel C. Haskell, has compiled for the New York Public Library a "Check-List of Early English Printing, 1475-1640, in the New York Public Library," the first part of which, (A to Dyke) appears in the current number of the *Bulletin*. The printing of the list at this time comes in response to a request from A. W. Pollard for help in connection with the Union List of Early English Printing which he is preparing for the Bibliographical Society.

The fourth semi-annual volume of *The Fleuron*, edited in England by Oliver Simon and published in this country by the Chaucer Head Bookshop at 32 West 47th Street, has just been received and contains articles of great interest to collectors. Frederic Warde, formerly of the Princeton University Press and now associated with Stanley Morrison in London, contributes a valuable article on Bruce Rogers accompanied with a check-list of Rogers's books which have been signed with his name or initials. This list covers Mr. Rogers's work for thirty years.

The Salad Bowl

There are no very definite conclusions as to what The Novel is. So tangled has the question now become that I fancy that if you were to present a gentleman from Mars, who had a healthy interest in English literature, with a page of Mrs. Virginia Woolf's "Jacob's Room," a free verse by Miss Edith Sitwell, and one of Mr. Pearsall Smith's "Trivia," he would be puzzled to name the one of these three belonging to the genre of the novel.

—Hugh Walpole, in a lecture on The English Novel at Cambridge University, 1925.

Everything is obvious, the diction mere commonplace. The rhythm is that of a rocking horse, and the sentiment mere sugar. But what a relief! What a relief to have escaped for once from *le mot propre*, from subtle elaboration of diction and metre, from complicated states of mind, and all the profound obscurities of Shakespeare and Mr. T. S. Eliot.

—From Lytton Strachey's address on Pope.

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AMERICAN TURF REGISTER and Sporting Magazine, volume 15, 1844, also the following numbers or the engravings.—Vol. IV, October 1832, Indians gathering wild-rice. April 1833, "Timolion"—Volume VII, June 1836, "Tramp"—Volume VIII, November 1836 "Felt"—Volume XIV, April 1843, "Grey Eagle," January 1843, "Fashion."

Memorials of the Discovery and Early Settlement of the Bermudas, by Sir J. H. Lefroy, 2 vols. London 1877-79.

Down the West Branch by Capt. C. A. J. Farrar.

Heroes and Heroines of the Grand National. The Acadians in Song and Story, Ficklin. In Acadia, Ficklin, New Orleans, 1893.

"The Rock Floor of Intermont Plains of the Arid Regions" by Charles Rollins Keyes, pub. in Bulletin of Geological Society of America, vol. 19, 1908.

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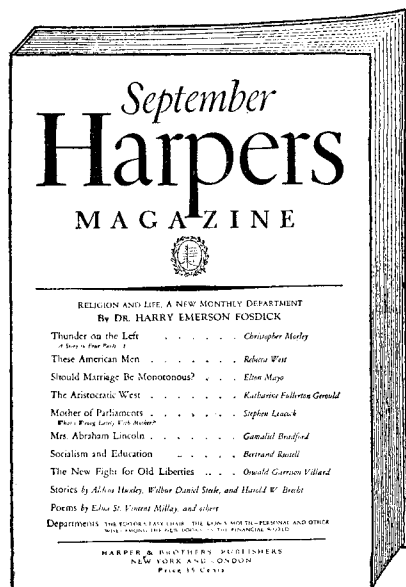
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CHRISTOPHER MORLEY
Thunder on the Left

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