

Note and Comment

BARNET J. BEYER, Inc., of New York, has issued a catalogue which goes far toward establishing this house in the first rank as a discriminating purveyor of desirable books and autographs. A good many pieces are priced very reasonably; a Lewis Carroll manuscript at \$17.50, Coleridge at \$25, or Shelley at \$67.50, show that even in these days one does not need a million in order to possess pleasurable literary treasures. Other things cost more; there is Frederick Locker's collection of letters from Kate Greenaway, with sketches, drawings, and water colors, matched by a group of original drawings by Aubrey Beardsley; a remarkable series of letters from Samuel Butler to his sister, from which three pages of extracts are printed; and William Butler Yeats's personal set of the Cuala and Dun Emer publications. It is interesting to note that this dealer holds Thoreau and Horace Walpole at just about the same rate.

The Alexander Kohut Memorial Collection of Judaica, which was presented to Yale by Rabbi Kohut's son in 1915, is described by Leon Nemoy in the leading article in the current issue of the Yale University *Library Gazette*. This library, supplemented by a very fine collection of Hebrew grammars and dictionaries, and all of the best of both old and new Yiddish *belles-lettres*, forms one of the distinguished sections of the Yale Library, and the article states that adequate space for its growth is provided in the plans for the Sterling Memorial Library building, upon which work is now in progress. There is gratifying evidence that bibliography is winning academic recognition, in a note which reports that twelve Yale graduate students have taken a course on that subject, and that twenty-three undergraduates registered in a course on the use of the library.

Anyone who knows collectors of books will understand why the subject of public benefactions seems pertinent to this column. It is doubly justified when the text is a publication from the Holybrook Press at the English Reading, which is likely to es-

The Compleat Collector.

RARE BOOKS · FIRST EDITIONS · FINE TYPOGRAPHY

By Carl Purington Rollins & George Parker Winship.

"Now cheaply bought for thrice their weight in gold."

cape the notice of some people whom it might interest. It concerns a certain John Kendrick of that burgh, a wealthy clothier who died in 1624. His particular benefactions are of no especial significance overseas, but the account of them, and of the way they were mal-administered until the trusts were put in order some fifty years ago, show in the clearest way how deeply rooted in the American pre-natal national inheritance is the habit of making testamentary provision for the general good.

God save us all! The jig is up, and all good book collectors may as well abandon hope. Let them but breathe a hint of interest in any author or subject, and they are doomed to entry on a card labeled "Prospect" with the telltale data concerning fads and fancies, and such unlikely comments as "Pays promptly."

Nothing could be simpler. "Knowledge of stock obtained by reading and study is all important but it is not necessary," says our newest mentor. This is one of those dishonest quotations, cut off in the middle, but it is not much improved by the rest of the paragraph—"it is not necessary or possible to read completely every rare book."

When cataloguing, the bookseller should read the table of contents, the preface, and a few pages and try to determine the nature and chief selling point of an item as quickly as possible. He should jot this information down on the catalogue card and also on the end paper

of the book. He can now offer it for sale, e.g. as an Illinois or Mormon item, depending on his customers. With practice the whole process should not take over a minute or two." However, "the more rare and valuable the book the more time should be devoted to investigating it."

This last bit of wisdom is typical of the neat way in which M. H. Briggs, the author of an attractive treatise on "Buying and Selling Rare Books," proves that he is the veriest novice when it comes to matters of actual practice in the rare book trade. The rarer the book, the less time needs to be spent on looking up its "points," this being a technical term the author seems not to have met. The money is made by spending time on books that are not known to be rare, but for which the clever, or intelligent, bookseller creates a market by finding out all about them.

It is not a treatise safely to be recommended to a retail bookshop keeper, unless one wishes ill to his creditors. But a good many buyers of rare books are likely to find it entertaining reading. As a rule, collectors are a modest lot, well aware that they are being worked as suckers most of the time. Here is the proof, reinforced by precept upon precept. Scarcely, since Poor Richard's day, have more wise saws been packed into as many pages. For example: "A typewriter is not absolutely necessary;" "The bookseller should secure (but where?) the books wanted by his customers;" "To secure a stock of Americana

it is only necessary to make known that you want it." This explains how Goodspeed got the material for his recent Americana catalogue, a problem that sorely puzzled more than one rival in the trade. But it should hearten these same rivals, for "Good" has been making his wants known since before most of them were out of short pants. The moral of this digression will be lost, however, unless attention is called to another fact that the author of this treatise does not mention, if he knows it, that the prize was landed, not because it was wanted, but because of a reputation built up by many years of upright dealing.

The text of the treatise is enlivened by occasional sample conversations which the shopkeeper is advised to hold with Mr. B. or Mr. H. or Mr. Y. These recall a true story, for which witnesses can be produced. It was on Park Street in Boston just two years ago. Two Harvard youths wandered into one of the three shops on that hillside, and asked the attendant (who sported a fraternity pin and the Phi Beta Kappa key) what he had for Press books. As he was puzzled, they explained: "What have you got of Merrymount or Kelmscott, or Riverside, or Riccardi?"

"No," said the clerk, decisively, "we do not carry those books. You will have to go somewhere else for pornographic literature."

The November number of the *Overland Monthly* is devoted to appreciations of George Sterling by Edwin Markham, Charles Caldwell Dobie, Ina Coolbrith, Robinson Jeffers, Mary Austin, Witter Bynner, James Hopper and others; and the December Number will again be devoted to tributes to the same poet from, among others, Gertrude Atherton, Charmian London, Will Irwin, Hildegard Flanner, Upton Sinclair, and Ines Irwin.

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THE LURE OF BOOK collecting is the lure of the chase; it had its roots, like the lure of collecting anything, in the brain of that dim ancestor who one morning in pursuit of the day's food supply discovered a joy in the hunt itself which was something apart from the pleasure of consuming the quarry.—JOHN T. WINTERICH.

ADVERTISING RATES for this section: five cents a word for twenty consecutive insertions, seven cents a word otherwise.

New Books from the list of



JOHN DAY

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Fiction*

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The End - of - the - Season Discovery

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