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*The Saturday Review
of Literature*

26 WEST 45th ST., NEW YORK CITY

The World of Rare Books

By **FREDERICK M. HOPKINS**

A. EDWARD NEWTON'S LIBRARY

SOMETIME ago A. Edward Newton, author of "The Amenities of Book Collecting," privately printed a brochure on "My Library" for distribution among his friends. This article is reprinted in the current number of *The Bookman's Journal* with the author's consent. From this source we reprint the following paragraphs descriptive of the library of an author in whom all book collectors are interested:

"My library is a large and dignified room; the entrance to which is through a small vestibule which separates it from the rest of the house, which is not fireproof, whereas my library is, or at least is supposed to be. Opposite the entrance, over the fireplace, is a painting, the original of which is in the Platin-Moretus Museum at Antwerp. It represents Gutenberg standing by his printing press, showing a leaf of his famous Bible to an old-time scrivener. Leaning upon the press, in a careless attitude, is a young lad who shows an indifferent interest in the story—he has doubtless heard it before—that Gutenberg is telling his friend. The scrivener can scarcely believe his eyes: something which it would have taken the scrivener several days to produce, has appeared upon a sheet of white printing paper in less than a minute! Is it witchcraft? No. It is the birth of printing from movable types in Europe and I never look at this picture without thinking of my pleasant adventures with a Gutenberg Bible.

"The walls of my library are lined with books, as the walls of a library should be, except, on the east and west sides, they are pierced with windows; so that the room is cheerful and sunny practically throughout the day. On the left side is my most valuable possession, the portrait of Samuel Johnson by Sir Joshua Reynolds. It was painted for Dr. Taylor of Ashbourne, two years before the Doctor's death. It is a beautiful painting, and, as Amy Lowell once said, it explains as no other picture of Johnson ever does, why his friends loved him so. Below and on both sides is my Johnsonian collection, begun forty years ago.

"Over the door by which we enter is the original of a picture which is known as 'An Evening Party at Sir Joshua Reynolds.' It is a sketch rather than a painting, but is suggestive of the atmosphere of my library. Around a table are seated Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Johnson, Gold-

smith, and others who made up that immortal coterie.

"The left wall is largely devoted to my favorite authors: Dickens, Lamb, and Goldsmith; while in the corner are my Stevensons, Blakes, my colored plate and sporting books. In the opposite corner are my poets, my 'rare' books, my few but desirable manuscripts, and my Bibles; while in the display case, back of the couch, is a goodish collection of bindings.

"On the right hand side are my 'sets' and my fiction, from Defoe to Hardy, with the eighteenth century especially stressed. As I have said, my books have been collected upon no well matured plan, but as a lot they are not bad; and the gathering of them together has been the joy of my exceptionally busy life.

"At the end of the long, narrow passage which gives entrance to this room, is another fireproof room, known in the house as the 'old library.' It is full of the odds and ends that an acquisitive man gathers about him almost in spite of himself; prints, pictures, and books. This room is my playroom: in it I 'scissors and paste' my little papers together, kidding myself into the belief that I am an author. It holds my books of reference, my dictionaries, my bibliographies, and my book catalogues—which to the collector are a relaxation—as novels are to others. And in it accumulate the books of the moment, which we should buy even if we do not always read them. I suppose that in the back of my mind is the idea that as I am occasionally guilty of publishing a book, which others buy, I should take a dose of my own medicine.

"I have little respect for a collector who is not willing to back his judgment as to the value of a modern book. It is all very well to say, 'there is a sense of security in an old book which time has appraised for us,' but we, ourselves, should do a bit of appraising. We should not, as too many picture collectors do, buy names only, after others have made them famous. Good books are constantly coming out. Why did we wait fifty years before we began buying 'Moby Dick?' And if we are not wise enough to buy Mrs. Wharton's 'Ethan Frome,' and Kit Morley's 'Parnassus' when they come out, let us do so now,—and in each case pay fifteen dollars for our neglect. Suppose we blunder in buying a book, what difference does it make? Let us keep on buying until we get a good average."

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