

The AMEN CORNER

WE question whether there is offered to anyone a more salutary experience than an evening before the open fire with a book-loving friend. There was benediction in it

when, recently, till late "we twain
Discussed with buoyant hearts
The various things that appertain
To bibliomaniac arts."

Collectors had returned from Icarian flights at the Kern sale, some with warmed wings, others still with warm enthusiasm. Considering the altitudes of those Kern records one naturally wonders just where this Pegasan hobby will land us. For, whereas the real relief is in curing the bibliophile of his obsession, one knows full well that the tenacity in man and his delight in books will remain to raise the bidders at future auctions. Meanwhile, however, it is pleasant to know that many will continue to practice this honorable art in the byways and to cull alike from prodigious and modest book stalls those less heralded authors who prove both the book-lover's pleasure and his wisdom.

The discussed damage of cataclysmic sales has cooled many cups of coffee. But we are not much concerned with this millionaire's game. What is far more ravaging to book collecting, to our way of thinking, is the publication of padded and fussy first editions. The situation is imminent in which a man may not buy a first edition of his favorite author without buying with it a colored box, an extra half pound of bad paper, a worthless preface written by an indiscriminate flatterer, and a number neither written in nor seen by the author. This is the metamorphosis of the autographed copies once held dear by a few chosen friends!

But there remain publishers who, we have faith, will not deal in these absurdities. The Oxford Press is such a publisher. There is an air of integrity exhaling from their books that one gratefully admires. And what delights for the collector!

We came on a very recent publication of theirs yesterday that will delight the Johnsonians. Oxford is rich already with Johnsoniana. *Rasselas*,¹ and *Letters of Samuel Johnson*,² collected and edited by G. Birkbeck Hill, 2 vols.; *Lives of the English Poets*,³ *Johnsonian Miscellanies*,⁴ including anecdotes by Hester Piozzi, prayers and meditations, etc.; *Boswell's Johnson*⁵ (have you found a tome so amazing cheap?); *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*,⁶ etc., edited by R. W. Chapman; *Proposals for Printing Bibliotheca Harleiana*,⁷ reproduced in facsimile from the original folio. These, and more, are treasures for the Johnsonian raker. But the new *Johnson and Boswell Revised*⁸ is full of the biographer. It consists of three essays by David Nichol Smith, R. W. Chapman, and L. F. Powell. Boswell's patience and politeness are displayed in many humorous quotations from the two proofs of the first edition of the *Life of Johnson* in Mr. R. B. Adam's collection in Buffalo. And "detail and accuracy are added to the corpus of Johnsoniana." A more ambitious work is the *Centenary Edition of the Works of Tolstoy*.⁹ When finished it will be the only complete English edition of Tolstoy. Aylmer Maude, the translator, was both Tolstoy's friend and biographer. Many worthy English and American authors, including G. B. Shaw, John Galsworthy, William Lyon Phelps, Jane Addams, have written prefaces to the 21 volumes.

R. W. Chapman's essays seem mnemonic of all worthwhile books. A reference of his brought us back the other evening to that series whose beauty is unmatched among books of their price. We mean, of course, the *Tudor and Stuart Library*.¹⁰ This group of titles exists for those for whom old originals are too dear to possess. They are reproductions of these editions printed with types that are cast from the matrices procured by John Fell in 1660, on paper made from the old recipe. For the same taste are published the Type-Facsimile Reprints.¹¹ Word for word, page for page they reproduce their models and satisfy the eye as does a Rembrandt or a Haden etching. "These are works of useful piety which we cannot too much commend." And we urge that you look at them, you who love the beauty of old books.

A. Edward Newton in "This Book-Collecting Game" has said of the *New English Dictionary*,¹² that its possession is "a species of swank." But we should willingly bare this unpleasant epithet to own such a magnificent "item."

—THE OXONIAN.

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Dwiggins Exhibition

AT the Art Center, 56 East 65th Street, there is an exhibition of work in the graphic arts which should be seen by all interested in the progress of design as applied to printing. For many years Mr. William A. Dwiggins of Boston has worked in highly individual and most delightful ways, always attacking his problems in a fresh manner, and frequently mingling whimsy and charm with his designing. Now the American Institute of Graphic Arts has brought together a large number of pieces of his work—books, advertising designs, pattern-work of various kinds, posters, pictures, and, not least in interest, a collection of most meticulously cut stencils with which Mr. Dwiggins produced his later decorations. It would be well if the dabblers who think that a few lines of 1830 fat-face type and a hodge-podge of geometric ornaments, all thrown recklessly on the page, constitute "modernism," would look at the poster recently done for the Metropolitan Museum of Art—a poster which is a successful rearrangement of spatial elements in the new way. The exhibition as a whole shows what a fertile imagination in leash to intelligence can produce.

On Monday evening, February 4th, when the exhibition was opened, the medal of the American Institute of Graphic Arts was presented to Mr. Dwiggins, and Mr. Dwiggins and Mr. Francis Meynell of the Nonesuch Press, London, spoke briefly.

R.

First Editions

FIRST EDITIONS OF TO-DAY AND HOW TO TELL THEM. By H. S. BOUTELL. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1929. \$1.

THIS is one of the most interesting and informative books that have recently appeared. Mr. Boutell has, with unusual patience, collected from English and American publishers statements of the manner in which they generally indicate first impressions, and either by quoting from the letters received in reply to his questions, or by using information given directly to him by the publishers themselves, has succeeded in bringing together an amount of definite knowledge available in no other one place. To collectors, nothing could be more useful—there is always a sense of satisfaction in forcing an American publisher to admit anything, especially those firms that seem to enjoy calling attention to their various printings, conveniently, on the dust-wrappers of their books, and leaving the volumes themselves indistinguishable from one another—and Mr. Boutell has earned general gratitude by the manner in which he has accomplished his work. There is no question of its value and importance to everyone interested in modern English and American writers.

The two introductory notes to the book are worth quoting, as they serve to bring out the essential difference between "edition" and "printing" in a particularly clear manner. The first, from the publishers, follows: "As Messrs. Arrowsmith observe . . . the correct term is not First Edition but First Impression or Issue. Unfortunately this error of terminology is almost universal; and it was felt that to use any but the usual phrase in the title of the book would be to invite misapprehension. One hopes that a better state of things will one day prevail." Mr. Boutell, in his, makes the same distinction, and adds a few sentences explaining his purpose: "Generally speaking, the collector of 'first editions' is really a collector of 'first impressions,' a first impression being a book from the first lot struck off the presses, and a 'first edition' comprising all books which remain the same in content and in format as the 'first impression.' A 'second impression' is a second printing. A 'second edition' postulates some alteration of text or format. But these terms are, unfortunately, not strictly adhered to. It is hoped that this book will serve to guide the collector amidst these intricacies. The publishing houses of Great

Britain and the United States are listed in alphabetical order, and in every case the information is quoted directly from letters, material, or information received from the publishers themselves."

G. M. T.

Auction Sales Calendar

C. F. Heartman (612 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, N. J.).

February 16—American Historical Pamphlets; books and autographs. Barbe Marbois's "History of Louisiana," 1830; Beltrami's "Découverte des Sources du Mississippi," 1824; "The Retraction of Mr. Charles Chancy, formerly Minister of War in Harfordshire," 1641; William Barton's "True Interest of the United States," 1786; Paine's "Dissertations on Government," 1786; "Georgia," A Poem, London, 1736; six letters of Longfellow's to Mr. Ticknor, 1859-1863; a complete copy with the three maps of the "New Jersey Bill in the Chancery of New Jersey, at the Suit of John Earl of Stair," New York, 1747; several manuscript maps of surveys in the state of New Jersey; Rafinesque's "Prodrome d'une Monographie des Rosiers de l'Amérique Septentrionale," no place or date; the rarest of the Selkirk pamphlets, the "Report of Proceedings at a Court of Oyer and Terminer . . . Held by Adjournment at Quebec, 21 October, 1819," Montreal, 1819; E. C. Genet's "Memorial on the Alluvions or Obstructions at the Head of the River Hudson," Albany, 1818; a collection of about thirty-eight pamphlets relating to the Embargo, and the War of 1812; and a collection of early American Medical pamphlets.

There have been recently two sales of interest at Stan. V. Henkels' in Philadelphia. On the sixth of February the items were

largely rare Americana: R. B. Sage's "Scenes in the Rocky Mountains," Philadelphia, 1846; John Marshall's "Life of George Washington," 1804-1807; T. L. McKenney and James Hall's "History of the Indian Tribes of North America," 1836-1844; several Thomas Paine items; James Ralph's "The Touch-Stone: or, Historical, Critical, and Theological Essays," London, 1728, and several railroad and canal pamphlets. On the fourteenth the sale was almost entirely of historical letters and documents: a letter of six pages from John Adams to John Binns; two letters of Washington, one dated November 15, 1762, dealing with his shipment of tobacco, and the other to General Green ordering table linen and china for his personal use at camp; the original search warrant for Benedict Arnold's house; letters from the Presidents; the manuscript book of poems by Samuel Gwinnett, the brother of Button Gwinnett; letters of Emerson, Hawthorne, and Benjamin West.

The library of the late Thomas L. Raymond was sold at the Anderson Galleries on the thirteenth and fourteenth of the month. The more interesting items were: Ashdene Press books; William Blake, including several of the scarce Muir facsimile editions; Sir Richard Burton; publications of the Carteret Book Club; Stephen Crane; the Cuala Press books; the Doves Press Bible and several other volumes done by this Press; Thomas Hardy, including a copy of the 1904 "Dynasts" with the title-page of volume 1 tipped in, and the preface of the 1903 issue; Lafcadio Hearn; Henry James; George Moore; Walter Pater; books designed by Bruce Rogers; Vale Press books; a large group of Walt Whitman books, with the original manuscript and corrected proof of his "Riddle Song"; Oscar Wilde, and William Butler Yeats.

A note of apology is due to the readers of this department. Because of the practice, apparently in force at several of the American auction rooms, of refraining from mailing either notices or catalogues of sales until about a week or ten days ahead of time, it is impossible, as a rule, to write of these events except in the past tense. The American Art Association, it is a pleasure to add, not only sends out its catalogues promptly, but supplies valuable notes of forthcoming auctions several weeks in advance. The writer's apologies are offered most sincerely to those persons who, under other circumstances, might have been interested in trying to purchase volumes at sales brought too late to their attention.

G. M. T.



QUARTET by Jean Rhys is the story of the relentless conflict between four sex-entangled personalities on the Left Bank. "There is no doubt about the power of Miss Rhys' characterizations. The painful reality of the situation is raised to a higher plane than that of mere story telling."—New York Herald Tribune

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Stray Items

ALLEN LEWIS is one of the few competent American wood-engravers. He has made a frontispiece, a title-page, and some decorative units for Balzac's "Jésus Christ en Flandre," which was issued at Christmas, 1928. It was printed at the Strawberry-Hill Press in a small edition, which will be prized by the recipients.

ANOTHER belated notice of a Christmas book belongs to "It Also Rains in Paris," sent me by Curtis Stuart Loughlin of Portland, Maine, who was for some years associated with T. B. Mosher. The small booklet pleases me because it was done with

much economy of means—a small amount of type and a very old job press—yet it is well printed and well conceived. Most of the equipment necessary to produce fine printing should be in the head.

R.

THE Yale University Library has recently received from Mr. Charles Webb and his sister, Miss Elizabeth H. Webb, a set of the *Californian*. This periodical, founded in San Francisco in 1864 by Charles Henry Webb, was edited at several periods during its life by Bret Harte who, with Mark Twain, was a regular contributor to it from the outset. William Dean Howells once re-

marked of the young men who produced it that "with the fatuity of gifted people . . . they brilliantly coöperated to its early extinction." It will be remembered that a few years ago, Mr. John Howell brought out a volume containing the contributions made by Bret Harte and Mark Twain to this periodical. There are, at the present time, at least five other files of the *Californian* known to exist: one, absolutely perfect and complete, in the Bancroft Library of the University of California; one in the California State Library at Sacramento which lacks the issues for 1868 (the final year of the paper's existence); one, rather imperfect, that passed from the Bancroft Library to

Mr. Howell; one in the Academy of Pacific Coast History of which nothing definite is known, and one, consisting of the first two volumes only, the C. W. Stoddard-Brandon-Kozlay copy, that was sold at auction in March, 1926.

G. M. T.

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