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## Out of the Depths

AMERICAN BOOK-PRICES CURRENT 1932-1933. Edited by Mary Houston Warren. New York: R. R. Bowker Co. 1934. \$20.

THIS, the thirty-ninth annual unit in a sequence of manuals the usefulness of which increases with each succeeding ordinal, may well grow to be regarded in the years to come as the most essential in the series—assuming for the avoidance rather than for the sake of argument, that there are degrees of essentiality. For the new A. B. P. C. is more than a digest of book-auction prices—it is a chart of the Dead Sea, a meteorological table of the doldrums.

The competent editor of the series is fully alert to the significance of the latest number. Here, declares Miss Warren in a preface that is an admirable summary of the Dark Days, one may learn "just how far price levels gave way in a period of financial stress, what types of books gave ground most and what gave little, what areas of books found most continuing demand when funds for purchase were necessarily so low." Having courageously said the worst, Miss Warren offers two pages of heartening statistics listing dozens of record high prices attained during the year under dissection. And she finds encouragement in the fact that in the new compilation hundreds of titles appear in an auction record for the first time.

This latter fact may prove in time (and no long time at that) to be of more hopeful import than any direct though impressive comparisons of yesterday's prices with day before yesterday's. A spirit of independence is making itself felt in the world of collectors, and in that spirit inheres the whole justification for collecting. The collector who merely follows the beaten path is gradually being outmoded, and mode is as formidable an influence in book-collecting as in hair-dressing. Will next year's A. B. P. C. also record hundreds of items not previously listed in auction records? Judging by so much of the new season as is already history, one assumes little risk in lining up with the ayes.

J. T. W.

## Trollope on Hunting

HUNTING SKETCHES. By Anthony Trollope. Introduction by James Boyd. Drawings by Robert Ball. New York: The Gosden Head, 1934.

THE Harbor Press has produced, for the Gosden Head, a neat and fitting volume of Trollope's hunting sketches. Typographically the book suggests the Victorian era in a fitting way—pages of a chaste roman type, surrounded by border rules, and decorated with initials and sketches suggestive of lithography, end papers of hunting scenes, and a binding such as befits the time.

This is the first illustrated edition of Trollope's hunting sketches, and is a pleasant addition to that growing number of books printed in America for the sportsman's library.

R.

## On Incunabula

THE STUDY OF INCUNABULA. By Konrad Haebler. Translated by Lucy E. Osborne, with an introduction by A. W. Pollard. New York: The Grolier Club, 1934.

THE author of this book is one of the leading European bibliographers, first head of the *Kommission für den Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, author of "Typenrepertorium der Wiegendrucke" and of important books on early printing in Spain and Portugal. The book is a translation of his "Handbuch der Inkunabelkunde" (Leipzig, 1925), which in its turn was originally a series of lectures given by Dr. Haebler in Berlin in 1923.

The general purpose of the lectures was to serve as an introduction to the study of incunabula, and to this end the author, from the wealth of his experience with early printed books, has summarized the

present state of knowledge of the subject. Forty pages are devoted to the meaning, history, and literature; seventy-five to the make-up of the book; and one hundred and fifty to the technical aspects of printing and publishing. Obviously, within such narrow limits there cannot be a very full treatment of any phase of incunabula, but there is a satisfactory statement of the general problems, ranging from the question as to the exact time limits of the incunabula period to all the intimate details of the printed page.

The book as a whole is clearly written,

## PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a select and intelligent clientele; exchange and barter of literary property or literary services; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, travelling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature; expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purposes and character of *The Saturday Review*. Rates: 7 cents per word. Address Personal Dept. *Saturday Review*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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ASIATIC Picture Expedition wants travel writer seeking fame, fortune. Payne, Box 707, Red Bluff, California.

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IS THERE a refreshing community in such vicinities as Westport or Cos Cob where two girls can rendezvous inexpensively? Tennis and swimming facilities. No commercialized projects. A home owner—some kindred spirit—or what ideas have you? Box 630.

CHICAGO, North Shore Mesdames, Mes-sieurs: Economical dinners for epicures prepared in your kitchen by Northwestern graduate desiring to cook her way through six weeks' summer school. Have you a room for me in return? Discriminating references—culinary, moral. Box 631.

and with admirable succinctness. As an elementary treatise for the student of incunabula, it will have immediate value, but as a handbook of incunabula it is of course too condensed and too general.

One curious error must be noted. On page 47 there is reference to the watermark as a "wire figure fixed in the network of the deckle." The deckle, of course, has no network: it is merely an open frame placed on the mould as it is dipped into the vat. The network of wire is on the mould.

The printing of the volume by the Harbor Press is clear, simple, and dignified, with paper, type, and binding all well selected.

R.

## Chinese Poetry

ONE HUNDRED NAMES. A Short Introduction to the Study of Chinese Poetry. With translations by Henry H. Hart. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1933. \$2.50.

A trim little book, carefully edited and as carefully printed: introduction, translations, bibliography, and three indices, making a handbook of information about Chinese poetry.

R.

## PERSONALS

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WANTED—New York advertising man (white) wishes to take to dinner earthly, wise and mildly refined woman; 35-43, 103-133 pounds, with dark eyes and hair. Culture not too important, but should be able to read and write. Box 637.

MALE 28—Finds old-fashioned stays unable to cope with modern ways. Desires creative work enough to stop dry-rot of mind and money enough to keep bodies of wife and son from wasting away. Suggestions solicited if no capital investment required. Bootblack to President ideas hold no appeal. Box 638.

YOUNG LADY, lovely voice, exchange vocal lessons for piano accompaniment. Cultured gentleman, 35-40. New York vicinity. Box 639.

WANTED—Intelligent information regarding First Century Christian Fellowship (Oxford Group). Box 640.

COLLEGE GIRL, 19, fond of children, wishes summer position as companion to only child. Box 641.

DO YOU EVER get a longing for some good old-fashioned Black Walnuts? If so, you can get the meats, fresh cracked and from the Shenandoah valley of Virginia, five-pound lots, \$2.50, two pounds, \$1.25. Post-paid. Payment in ten days will be satisfactory. Box 642.

SPINSTER OF SCIENCE, twenty-three, quiet, well-bred, easy to look at, fairly intelligent, Yankee, broke. Education literary, tastes artistic. Unusual eyesight, manual dexterity. Adaptable. Can cook, can sew, can learn. Can't canvass or evade the law. Wants job. What have you? Box 643.

E. I. J. Received enjoyable letters too late. Please write again. Sonia.

BOOKS—Private party wishes to dispose of following items all in mint condition: Anthony Adverse, d. w., autographed by author, \$5.00; Philip the King, Masefield, Ltd. signed ed., \$7.50; Passions Spin the Plot, Ltd. d. w., signed ed., \$7.50; Men Without Women, no d. w., \$7.50; In Our Time, with d. w., \$12.00. Separately as a lot, \$35.00. Box 644.

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kitchen; porch, electric lights. Address, V. D.  
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**W. J. D.** call for another letter at S. S.  
Company under same initials. It will ex-  
plain. E. F.

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Do you want a cheerful companion with a  
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trustworthy, capable companion for your  
children—one who will be indefatigable in  
answering questions while you quietly enjoy  
yourself? Woman teacher of thirty-four, ex-  
perienced and especially successful with ad-  
olescents, seeks summer position. Michigan.

**MEDICAL STUDENT**, ex-college prof.,  
financially unable to complete studies. Classes  
end May 12. Suggestions??? Box 647.

**INVENTOR**, holding valuable patents and  
copyrights, has interesting proposition for  
writer or group willing to finance working  
model. Box 646.

**HIGH SCHOOL** English teacher, college  
graduate, desires summer work; tutor, com-  
panion, assistant, clerical work, most any-  
thing. Knowledge of typing. Pleasing per-  
sonality. Box 648.

**SHUT-IN**, who has lived in Haiti and  
thinks it the most beautiful country in the  
world, would welcome correspondence with  
someone who has lived in Haiti or elsewhere  
in tropics. Tropics.

**WOMAN** of moderate intelligence, talents,  
desires intermittent contact with three well-  
informed women to discuss vital topics and  
indulge in constructive criticism. Address  
XYZ.

**COLLEGE STUDENT**, pre-med, English  
honors, wishes summer position. Tutor, com-  
panion, manual labor, or what you will. 326  
Yale Station, New Haven, Conn.

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lescent, talented handwriting analyst; former  
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City.

## Book Code Signed

(Continued from page 648)

trade books not only removes competition for the regular bookseller; it does so, quite as directly, for the book clubs, the remainder outlets, and the rental libraries. Stimulation of business in these three lines is on the cards. This raises an important question for authors, since the increase of rental library business does not add proportionally to royalties. It is quite possible for 40,000 people to read 800 copies of a book, the author's royalty remaining the same as if only 800 people had bought it in bookshops. This is admittedly an extreme figure; most books will not stand up for fifty readings. And the tendency will be somewhat counter-balanced if the number of rental libraries continues to increase. If rental library business increases out of proportion to book sales, the result will not be harmful to booksellers who maintain rental libraries, but it will work against the benefits of the booksellers' code to authors and publishers.

The chief consideration for the reader is that the Consumers' Advisory Board, after opposing book price maintenance, has given its approval. The support of this board is *prima facie* evidence that in the long run the booksellers' code will be beneficial to the general public. They have approved price maintenance only in special cases, and on strong grounds. In the dry-cleaning code, their approval was based on the necessity to maintain wages; in the book code, on the vital part played by the bookstore in the cultural and educational life of the community. No one who heard the Consumers' Board representative at the February 3 hearing, no one who has followed the Board's activities (as reported, for instance, in the *New York Herald-Tribune* of March 5, 1934) could question that they have come to this decision only after the most careful scrutiny of the facts.

If the code clears up what promised to become a serious condition of demoralization in the book business, that also is to the benefit of both author and book buyers. The extent to which books have been used as a football in price wars has given a misleading impression. To cite one instance familiar to the trade, a Brooklyn department store, during the week-end of March 10, 1934, advertised Sinclair Lewis's "Work of Art" for sale at \$1.44. This was a \$2.50 book, for which regular bookstores were paying at least \$1.50 a copy. Where did the department store's margin come from? Publishers' discounts vary with quantity, but only in relatively narrow limits. There can be no doubt that many losses on cut-price books have been charged to advertising, and paid for out of sales, at profit, of other articles. If a few customers have managed to beat the game, the effect as a whole has been misleading to the public.

If the code leads to the establishment of more and better bookstores, efficiently operated for the intelligent service of the customer, this will be a benefit to the public. If it leads to lax methods and inefficiency, it will not. There is no doubt that some department stores have given service equal in quality and helpfulness to that of any bookstore. Macy's book department has been particularly noted in this respect. It must also be remembered that existing booksellers have largely learned efficiency during the depression, as a result of keen price-cutting competition—because they had to.

As we have indicated, there is not much danger of a higher price level for books as a result of the booksellers' code.

## Trade Winds

☞ To the book trade, the signing of the code is the biggest thing that ever happened. And the book trade knows that there are three men to whom the credit is due: Cedric Crowell of the Doubleday shops, Frank Magel of Putnam's, President of the A. B. A., and Richard F. Fuller of the Old Corner, Boston. But nobody who missed the February 3 hearing could possibly know how much work these three men have actually done. At least two of them have been in Washington every week since February 3; Dick Fuller estimates that he has traveled 15,000 miles on the code. They have only one cause for regret, only one failure. The government wouldn't let them read into the minutes of the hearing Ogden Nash's epic poem, "The Booksellers' Dutch Treat," remembered as the feature of last year's convention.

(Whether a higher price level will follow the Graphic Arts Code remains to be seen, and is another story. At present the scale of manufacturers' prices adopted in this code has been suspended.) Some members of the reading public may overlook the multitude of considerations involved, and leap to the conclusion that they are being bilked. It must be firmly pointed out that the failure to obtain a special privilege, in discounts off list prices or otherwise, does not constitute being bilked.

These are the main considerations involved in the booksellers' code for the book reader. The questions raised can probably not be answered for several months. Meanwhile a big question has remained unspoken: has the booksellers' code brought an end to the thirty years' war for price control? Or is it the beginning of a new system in book distribution? No one can answer. No one can say what effect this code will have on seasonal methods of publishing (more books crowded into the spring season, or vice versa); or on book-buying (will people wait six months for a 34% discount?) The list price system is not the rock of ages; it is almost peculiar to the book trade. Most other articles are sold by manufacturers to retailers at a flat invoice cost, the retailer assuming responsibility for mark-up, i. e., selling price. The application of this system to books looks now like an improbable eventuality; but stranger things have happened. If the code-makers have guessed wrong—if the booksellers' code leads to a serious falling-off in the book business, instead of the expected stimulus—many cherished institutions may go by the board.

To return to actualities, however: the passage of the booksellers' code means one thing surely. The Consumers' Board and the NRA have become convinced of the peculiar, the unique character of the book business. It may be a small business, but it is important, and it works like no other. Once more the fundamental belief of bookmen—the one point on which all publishers and all booksellers will agree—is vindicated: the book business, my friends, is different.

## Booksellers Hail Code

By LOUIS GREENFIELD

**L** OUD huzzas rang throughout the bookshops when retail booksellers were officially notified that the National Recovery Administration approved the book-selling retail code.

A hurried survey by the *Review* of many New York shops revealed unanimous satisfaction with the code, and many of the booksellers are looking forward to a gradual increase in book sales. In this survey, however, the writer found only one bookseller who immediately abided by the decision of the Administration and re-marked his prices accordingly.

"The new price code has our heartiest approval," said Mr. Eastman Brown, manager of Dauber and Pine, 66 Fifth Ave.

"We've sold books at less than publishers' prices for the past three years only because we were compelled to by those department stores who have been slashing book prices to almost nothing. . . . The story now is a different one. On Saturday when we were first notified of the change we put the code into immediate effect."

Mr. Arthur Brentano, Jr., manager of Brentano's, said the new retail book code means "the salvation of the book business." Mr. Brentano looks forward to an increase in the retail book trade, particularly in popular items.

Asked about the six-months clause which prevents booksellers from cutting prices before that time, Mr. Brentano believes it a liberal one.

The Washington Square Bookshop on West 8th Street took the news jubilantly. "We look forward to an increase in business," said Mr. Horton. "Many of our evening customers are mainly library clients. Some of them are book purchasers, but withhold their purchase till the next day when they are able to dash down to those stores who were selling under publishers' prices. Our book purchases will be increased and the general effect upon the entire industry will be healthful."

"It was with the liveliest feelings of joy and satisfaction that we heard of the signing of the Retail Booksellers Code on Friday the 13th of April," said Miss Anderson and Miss Fleming of the Channel Book Shop. "There is no doubt that Mrs. Roosevelt by her courageous coming out on the side of the small bookshops and sending to the press a statement of their dilemma and her point of view about the justice of their cause did the whole book trade an incalculable service."

## from THE INNER SANCTUM of SIMON and SCHUSTER

Publishers, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York



... OGDEN NASH, murderer of the King's English, hammer of fools, and biographer of FOUR PROMINENT SO AND SO'S

After enjoying an under-cover speak-easy circulation in typewritten form [first edition carbon copies will make the ROSENBAHS of 2034 A. D. swoon with ecstasy] the famous and Rabelaisian quartet by OGDEN NASH, first published in amended form in *Happy Days*, is now released on its own, full strength, under the title *Four Prominent So-and-So's*.

This is the crushing answer to an insolent query which has been flung at Your Correspondents ever since that slightly mutilated classic appeared last year: "Are ye mice or men?"

The answer is "MEN!" and the price is two bits at most bookstores or direct from *The Inner Sanctum*.

This twenty-five cent publication of *Four Prominent So-and-So's* is a genuine first edition OGDEN NASH item, embellished with music by ROBERT ARM-STRONG, pictures by LITTLE MAN SOGLOW and an erudite introduction by WILLIAM SOSKIN, who quite properly points out that this "fierce and forthright anthem . . . is a genuine and authentic contribution to American folk song."



"... The mad-  
am was a lady,  
and a credit  
to her cult."

"I'm a debit to my country  
but a credit to my dad,  
The most expensive senator  
the nation ever had;  
I remember daddy's warn-  
ing that raping is a crime  
Unless you rape the voters  
a million at a time."

Inasmuch as *The Inner Sanctum* hasn't staged a contest or reader-response survey for a long time, this seems the logical moment to offer a free autographed copy of any one of OGDEN NASH's immortal masterpieces [*Hard Lines*, *Free Wheeling*, or *Happy Days*] for the wittiest four-line poem acclaiming the publication of *Four Prominent So-and-So's*. Address entries directly to *The Inner Sanctum* within a week from the day this column appears.



The two N's are beginning to click, and in no small way—Nijinsky, a biography of "the eighth wonder of the world" by his wife, ROMOLA NIJINSKY . . . and the *New Dealers* by the UNOFFICIAL OBSERVER . . . they are both outstanding best-sellers and fighting bravely for leadership on the best-seller list in general literature, not far behind a Viking Press entry, *While Rome Burns* by ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT, and *The Native's Return* by LOUIS ADAMIC (Harper's), two other books strongly recommended by those unofficial observers of the noun-and-adjective traffic—

ESSANDESS.

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