

The Compleat Collector

RARE BOOKS; CONDUCTED BY JOHN T. WINTERICH

*In alternate weeks this Department is devoted to Fine Printing
and is conducted by Carl Purington Rollins.*

Market Report

AMERICAN BOOK-PRICES CURRENT
1933-1934. Compiled by Mary Houston
Warren. New York: R. R. Bowker Co.
Limited to 700 copies. 1935. \$20.

FEW among today's rare-bookmen, either sellers or buyers, can recall vividly or even vaguely the appearance of the first unit in this indispensable series of manuals. A. S. W. Rosenbach was a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania, William Jennings Bryan's was the most familiar name in America, and "The Red Badge of Courage" was a best-seller. It was a day of young men, and not many of the young men were collecting books. Three years later it was possible to acquire for £105 the very "Pickwick" in parts which Charles Dickens gave to Mary Hogarth. If the nineteenth century (or the eighteenth, or the twentieth) produced a more valuable and moving association copy than this, the fact has not been made matter of record.

But this was long ago, and "American Book-Prices Current" has come of middle age, and celebrates with this its most recent appearance its fortieth birthday—celebrates it, too, in a thicker volume than last year's. The comparative amplitude of recent units, indeed, presents a comprehensive barometric chart of the rare-book market: 1929, 778 pages; 1930, 726; 1931, 829; 1932, 600; 1933, 612; 1934, 659. The gale still whistles in the futtock-shrouds, but like the pain which afflicted the young Macaulay when he upset the tea, it has already begun to abate. And the tremendous volume of offerings during the present season will insure a much bulkier A.B.P.C. for 1934-1935.

Sheer bulk is hardly the whole story in the appraisal of an auction season. But the auction houses are growing choosier; today's catalogues exhibit a much higher average price than did the catalogues of ten or (excepting certain high-voltage sales) of six or seven years ago. The Terry Sale (Part I) of last May averaged \$466 per item—a remarkable showing. And there should be at least some sentimental significance in the fact that the record price of the 1933-1934 season was brought by a draft of "The Star-Spangled Banner" in its author's hand—\$24,000.

Despite its comparative thickness the new A.B.P.C. exhibits gaps (no fault of its competent editor) which are difficult to explain. It was a thin year, for instance, for the great New Englanders. Of Bryant there were dispersed eleven lots divided among nine entries, of Emerson nineteen among twelve, of Hawthorne thirty-four among fifteen, of Holmes twenty-two among fourteen, of Longfellow thirty-five among twenty-one, of Lowell sixteen among eleven, of Thoreau twelve among five, of Whittier eleven among seven. Eight American authors of established

collector prestige—veritable staples of the rare-book market—are represented as a group in a full auction year by only one-hundred and sixty lots divided among fewer than one-hundred entries! The phenomenon is not likely to occur again. But it tends to prove that "American Book-Prices Current" is an eminently valuable manual even by reason of data which it does not cite because the data is not available for citation.

Marginalia

A unique copy of one of the earliest New York imprints, "Some Seasonable Considerations for the Good People of Connecticut," has been discovered by a London bookseller. . . . Unmistakable evidence that the pamphlet had been printed by William Bradford in 1694 was adduced by Wilberforce Eames in "The First Year of Printing in New York" (New York Public Library, 1928). . . . The Hanes collection of checkers books in the Providence Public Library comprises five hundred units. . . . Books and manuscripts of Joyce Kilmer which were included in the estate of his father, Dr. Frederick B. Kilmer, were bequeathed by the latter to Rutgers University. . . . Engrossed certificates signed by the founder, A. Edward Newton, have recently been mailed to members of the Trollope Society. . . . Copies of the pamphlet outlining the aims of the society (the pamphlet was the 1934 Newton Christmas booklet) may still be had at fifty cents each on application to Mr. Newton at 501 North 19th Street, Philadelphia. . . . The Lockwood Memorial Library at the University of Buffalo will be dedicated May 15th. . . . The prospectus of Herman Melville's "Journal Up the Straits," now being edited by Raymond Weaver for publication by The Colophon, Ltd., is itself an authentic Melville item.

Huntingtonana

Henry E. Huntington was known to his intimates as Ed—the E stood for Edwards, not Edward. Born in Oneonta, New York, in 1850, at no vast distance in time or space from another great Californian, Bret Harte, Huntington began his business career in 1870 as porter with a New York hardware house. His successful uncle, Collis P. Huntington, was impressed, and soon took the youth under his wing. Set to manage a West Virginia sawmill which turned out railroad ties, Ed Huntington quickly acquired an interest in the enterprise, speeded production, cut costs, and not long afterward owned the mill. His subsequent rise to economic eminence is no more unconventional than that of any other baron of transportation.

The story of his career, and of the development of the great library which bears his name, is summarized by Robert O. Schad, the library's curator of rare books, in "Henry Edwards Huntington: The Founder and the Library," issued by the library as a pamphlet following its serial publication in the *Huntington Library Bulletin*. The younger Huntington built up his collection much as the elder had built up the Southern Pacific. He incorporated into it large units which were already, so to speak, operating systems.

In theory the method does not sound like a particularly romantic program of collecting, but in practice—as the practice is described by Mr. Schad—it wore trappings of authentic purple. Certainly so far as scholarship is concerned, the world has definitely been the gainer. Huntington's purchase of the magnificent Church library *en bloc* in 1911 made possible the preservation in perpetuity of an assemblage of American source material which will be forever impossible of duplication.

There is something to inspire awe in the inclusiveness of the Huntington Library. Like Bacon, it has taken all knowledge for its province. And the day may come when a West Coast sloganeer will proudly proclaim: "If it isn't at San Marino it isn't a book!"

Over the Counter

The Saturday Review's Guide to Current Attractions

Trade Mark	Label	Contents	Flavor
ONE BREATH Patrick Carleton (Dutton: \$2.50)	Novel	The development of a tiny circus of 1785 into a great English amusement institution 100 years later under the fourth generation of owners.	Good
THE KLONDIKE NUGGET Russell A. Bankson (Caxton: \$2.50)	Americana	The story of Alaska's newspaper of the gold boom, illustrated with photographs.	Obvious
THE RIO KID Tom Roan (Godwin: \$2.)	Western	First old-fashioned dime novel train robbery we've seen in years.	Gun-smoke
COME, MY COACH Marjorie Worthington (Knopf: \$2.50.)	Novel	Attractive Lucy Benton, past her youth, plunges headlong into a love affair. The author is convincing with this sort of thing.	Feminine

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, including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. Address *Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.*

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MANUSCRIPT CRITICISM: Coley B. Taylor, Editor, Gotham House, Inc., contributor to *The Bookman*, *The Survey*, *Books*, *The World Tomorrow*, *Theatre Guild Quarterly*, etc., will criticize novels and book-length non-fiction. Terms on request. Coley B. Taylor, 160 Claremont Ave., New York.

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PERSONALS

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murdered...

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by Alice Campbell

• The deaths that began in London and ended in the antiquated sea-side hotel in Ste. Brigitte-sûr-Mer didn't seem mysterious at the time; it was only in the light of subsequent events that it became evident that they sprang from one incredibly cold-blooded, calculating intelligence. But which one of the little group there was it?

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