

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*

Emerson to Brooks

MT. HOLYOKE COLLEGE is celebrating its centennial, and the Williston Memorial Library is co-operating handsomely by conducting an exhibition of one-hundred American first editions paralleling the history of the college. The exhibition, arranged by the librarian, Flora B. Ludington, will be open through May 31st. The plan of selecting a book for each year of the century, from Emerson's "The American Scholar" to Van Wyck Brooks's "The Flowering of New England," inevitably makes for several odd pairings, but this very element adds to the excitement of the enterprise. Henry Ward Beecher's "Seven Lectures to Young Men" (1844) is followed by "The Raven," "Little Women" (1868) by Henry Charles Lea's "Studies in Church History," and Bellamy's "Looking Backward" (1888) by another special or retrograde movement—Lucy Larcom's "A New England Girlhood." At the head of each annual entry is a brief statement of some significant incident in Mt. Holyoke life for the corresponding year. Thus the year that saw "The Deerslayer" issued saw also the addition of a seventy-foot wing to the main college building; the year following (Bryant's "The Fountain"), Deacon Daniel Safford was moved to bestow two more pianos; the publication of "Ben-Hur" (1880) coincided with the installation of a hydraulic passenger elevator. The whole effect of the exhibition catalogue is to give an admirable picture of the college's growth and development as reflected against the cultural background of its first hundred years. The plan is eminently worth the consideration of educational institutions who have important anniversaries pending.

Frostaná

From Robert S. Newdick of the Department of English in Ohio State University, a thoroughgoing Frost student, comes an interesting set of observations on the new Clymer-Green bibliography of Robert Frost, noticed in this department April 3rd:

(1) In the section on First Appearances of Poems in Periodicals, p. 81: (a) while the "Class Hymn" is unsigned in the *High School Bulletin* it is credited to "Robert L. Frost" in a slip of Errata inserted in the June, 1891, issue; (b) the Hymn did not appear first in the Order of Exercises for the Forty-First Anniversary . . . [p. 3] which was issued the day it is dated, "Friday, July 1st," but in the *Bulletin*; (c) before it appeared in the Report of the Superintendent of Schools . . . [1892 section, p. 36,] it appeared in three local newspapers (*The Lawrence Daily American*, July 1, p. [2]; *The Evening Tribune*, July 1, p. [3]; *The Lawrence Daily Eagle*, July 2, p. [2]; and (d) it was reprinted also in the *Lawrence Telegram*, April 1, 1925, p. 14.

(2) In the section on Chronology, p.

151: (a) Frost taught English at Pinkerton Academy not 1905-11 but 1906-11. In *The Pinkerton Critic* for October, 1906, in "Changes at Pinkerton," is noted the "addition of Mr. Robert L. Frost, who is assisting in the English department."

The problem of the bibliographers in the Chronology was a difficult one of selection, yet a number of the points convey erroneous impressions. (1) The first honorary degree that is listed in Vermont's L. H. D., 1923, which ignores, as probably Mr. Frost would not, the honorary A. M. of Amherst, 1917, and the honorary A. M. of the University of Michigan, 1922. (2) *A Way Out* is noted as of 1929, the year of its first separate publication; but many will regard as more significant either the year of first publication, 1917, or the year of first production, 1919. (3) If other than Pulitzer awards are to be noted, and the Loines prize, 1931, is noted, why not note also other prizes, e.g., the Levinson prize, 1922? (4) Again, if Frost's election to the National Academy is to be recorded, 1930, why not also his election to membership in the International P. E. N. club, 1922?

A Rag and a Bone

Dr. George Watson Cole, librarian emeritus of the Henry E. Huntington library, and compiler, among various important bibliographical endeavors, of the great E. Dwight Church catalogue, has presented to Yale his collection of books about books, comprising some two thousand units. Princeton has also benefited by a recent freewill offering differing both in degree and in kind from Dr. Cole's be-

stowal, for Ralph C. Runyon of the class of 1908 has tendered to his alma mater a lock of Napoleon's hair and the red cord which Napoleon wore at St. Helena.

Locks of hair are reasonably frequent auction-room visitors, invariably well authenticated, else they would be definitely suspect. Frequently they are preserved in the doublures of finely-bound books, like beetles in amber, which seems as sound a way as any of insuring their perpetuity and of rendering them incapable of being mislaid. Some collectors will have no truck with them, any more than with those inkwells, pipes, walking sticks, duelling pistols, or tea-caddies of distinguished provenance which occasionally insinuate themselves into respectable bookshelves.

There is a sharp limit to the eligibility of candidates to the company of the clipped elect. Never, the Compleat Collector believes, has the cowlick of a living notable been posted for sale. He who trailed John Steinbeck or Thomas Wolfe or Ernest Hemingway into a barber-shop would soon be enjoying the sanctuary of the psychopathic or the accident ward. Somehow the intervention of the grave hallows what would otherwise be ridiculous—what may be ridiculous in spite of all. Even more is necessary—a degree of beatification, if not actual canonization, or at least a member's card in the Valhalla of the quasi-legendary. Thus Washington, Lincoln, and Napoleon are of the company, but not Wilson or Foch—not yet, at all events. Shelley, Keats, Whitman, Thackeray, Dickens are admissible, but not Hardy or Stephen Crane. No one would accept the credentials of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Drake, John Alden—collectable hair must be no fresher than seventy-five years and no more venerable than two hundred. Female tresses, despite their admittedly higher decorative status, do not seem to count. A queer business.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
MURDER HALF BAKED George Bagby (Covici-Friede: \$2.)	Sun-burned corpse neath Coney boardwalk involves Insp. Schmidt in other puzzling killings—all irking his feet, as usual.	Extortion-gang, shady "patriotic" organization, scared plutocrat, ditto gangster, and many others lend zest to yarn with lame finis.	Zippy
THE MYSTERY OF THE FRENCH MILLINER Sir Basil Thomson (Crime Club: \$2.)	Murder in England causes Insp. Vincent and Goron of Sûreté much cis- and trans-Channel anguish before solution.	Great amount of painstaking sleuthing, not much action, and penetrating commentary on processes of Justice in France and England.	Bit stodgy
DEAD IS THE DOOR-NAIL Paul Haggard (Lippincott: \$2.)	Sports reporter star and pix man pal trail slayer of gal tennis champ through morasses of purple verbiage.	It can't be the Hard-boiled yarn to end all of that ilk as successor is announced. Verbum Sap.	H ₂ S
THE VERA GERARD CASE Joseph Cottin Cooke (Manthorne and Bur-rack: \$2.)	Reconstruction of actual Manhattan cause célèbre with Carleton Bailey, talented amateur, ultimately solving crime.	Those who recall the Vera Gordon case may possibly agree that, even unsolved, it was dishd up better in the tabs.	Mediocre

Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

OLD QUERCUS'S big trope this week is the *Pen Women's Rally Song*. A publisher, who implores us not to identify him, brought it back from the Pen Women's convention in Cleveland last week: he swears that he actually heard them sing it. Words by Opal Hemler (can this be our old friend Opal Whiteley?), music by Alice Huber, quills at salute and here we go, with the vox angelica stop full out:—

Pen Women—Pen Women—

Artists of creation,

Striving with pencil, with brush and with pen;

Making immortal the thoughts of men.

The wise old owl looks down from above—

His sparkling eye is the light of love.

He guides our work.

He shares our fun.

We're one for all and all for one.

Pen Women—Pen Women—

Artists of creation,

Banded together to boost and to cheer,

Bringing the goal just a bit more near.

Pen Women—Pen Women—

When we hear the muses call

Replying

Keep trying—

All for one and one for all.

We are pleased to see Carson Pirie Scott and Company's *Thistle Leaf*, an occasional broadside from that big Chicago store's book department, giving special praise to MacLeish's verse play (written for radio) *The Fall of the City*. Among new books by Chicago authors, that city looks forward with considerable curiosity to Burton Rascoe's *Before I Forget* (Doubleday) in which Mr. Rascoe narrates his adventures down to the time of his leaving the *Chi. Tribune* in 1920.

We were heartily sorry to hear of the death of Leonard L. Mackall, distinguished bibliographer, who had been a regular contributor to our contemporary the *Herald Tribune Books* from its beginning in 1924. Innumerable stories are told of Mr. Mackall's acute instincts in the field of bibliophily; he was sometimes nicknamed "the Sherlock Holmes of book collectors."

The motto on Old Q.'s bookplate, if he had a bookplate, would be "Some poor bibliophile, who, either as a trade or as a hobby, was a collector of obscure volumes." The speaker is Dr. Watson, in *The Adventure of the Empty House*. Another good quote from the same volume (*The Return of S. H.*) is Holmes's remark "The Press, Watson, is a most valuable institution, if you only knew how to use it." This was after Holmes, for reasons of his own, had given a reporter a misleading steer on a certain story. It reminds Old Q. somehow of Kai Lung's famous method of extinguishing a fire—"by directing jets of air upon it." Does anyone but ourself and Mr. Hilaire Belloc remember Kai Lung? What do booksellers remember? We often wonder. We did not know, until told by Rodman Gilder, that Don Marquis's famous hokum play *The Old Soak* was published by Samuel French and is

now in its 3rd printing. Speaking of memories, none are so brief as publishers' recollections of other publishers' books. For instance, we find Little, Brown & Co. saying in an announcement that Dr. A. J. Cronin was "the most discussed novelist of the year 1931." Mightn't they have remembered a novel in 1931 called *The Good Earth*? Paul Hampden, son of the distinguished actor Walter Hampden, has joined the advertising staff of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Farrar & Rinehart and the Literary Guild have issued a joint statement announcing that the suit between them has been settled (*Trade Winds*, April 3 and May 8). The Guild has agreed that department stores taking orders for Guild selections must obtain signed subscriptions and make no over-the-counter deliveries of any selections. No cash payment with respect to the matters in suit was involved in the settlement.

Last week four more publishers signed fair trade agreements with booksellers in New York. Knopf's agreement protects books published on or after May 18; Reynal & Hitchcock is protecting all future titles; Doubleday, Doran is covering all trade books issued after June 1; Farrar & Rinehart is protecting active titles published during the last six months as well as books now scheduled for the fall list. Harcourt, Brace has mailed contracts to the trade in New York State offering protection on the fall list. Publishing firms intending to mail contracts as soon as they are printed include Dodd, Mead, the Viking Press, the Vanguard Press, and Stokes.

Reviewing Reviews

IN a recent appearance of this department, we quoted two peculiar opinions of Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men"—one of them a blat—and asked our readers for comments. The responses, printed on our letter page April 17 and 24, were interesting and encourage us to try again. This time we'll give you the reviews of what seems to be the most highly praised novel of the year, certainly the most highly praised since Steinbeck's. This is "The Outward Room": Millen Brand's story of a girl who escaped from an insane asylum and found herself through the love of a laboring man in New York.

Before "The Outward Room" reached reviewers it had already been decorated with jacket blurbs from Sinclair Lewis, Theodore Dreiser, Fannie Hurst, and Erskine Caldwell. The daily critics immediately gave it all they had. "Something to get wild about," said Harry Hansen in the *N. Y. World-Telegram*. "The story of the frightened, lonely girl in the big city is delicately true," wrote Lewis Gannett in the *N. Y. Herald Tribune*; "Mr. Brand steers his course, and Harriet's, with the deftness of a master." "Will take your breath away," said Charles Wagner in the *N. Y. Mirror*. "An exciting story. . . . Many readers will welcome it not only for its suspense and originality but for the reach of its imagination"—so run 22 of the thousand or so words of praise by Mary Ross in the *Herald Tribune Books*. "Original in the best, the most exact sense of the word," wrote Edith Walton in the

ENGLISH '37

THE NOVELIST AND THE READER

FROM our announcement of this course on page 21 of last week's issue one subscriber got the idea that Mr. DeVoto was going to give a series of lectures at the Columbia University Summer School. Not so. Mr. DeVoto will present his course only on the Editorial page of THE SATURDAY REVIEW, beginning with the issue of June 26th.

IN a series of closely related editorials, Mr. DeVoto will hold forth on various aspects of contemporary fiction. The course includes technical, psychological, and critical discussions of current novels and contemporary novelists.

1. What is the relationship between novelist and reader?
2. What determines the reader's satisfaction or dissatisfaction?
3. What determines the novelist's methods?
4. What are technical devices in fiction? Why are they used?

Don't miss the first lecture on June 26th

THE SATURDAY REVIEW of LITERATURE