

# The Compleat Collector

CONDUCTED BY CARL PURINGTON ROLLINS

## Stratford Harvest

UNDER the faintly malicious title of "This Shakespeare Industry," Ivor Brown and George Fearon have lately portrayed in entertaining fashion the actors in that fantasia known as the Shakespeare cult. Appropriately the book's frontispiece shows Bernard Shaw, the great "bardolater," in a bosky setting with hands in prayer. It was of a quite different Shakespeare industrialist that Carlyle asked "Can God inspire an idiot?"—but if Miss Delia Bacon, discoverer of the fact that Shakespeare was not Shakespeare, was not inspired by God she was incited by the Devil to

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**TWENTY  
THREE  
BOOKS**

**And the Stories  
Behind Them**

By JOHN T. WINTERICH

start an endless flow of nonsense. It was the activity of similar idiots, coddling the belief that because Shakespeare knew so many things he must have been something else than an actor and a poet, which led William Blades to write his "Shakespeare and Typography." Blades, a London printer and the biographer of Caxton, culled from the plays all the words which are current in the printing office (without regard to the content), and on that assembly of quotations he "proved" that Shakespeare must have been a printer. His case was as good, at all events, as that of many a more serious worker.

The Shakespeare industry is one of the largest, and frequently works more than one shift. Its product, confusingly enough, is of all sorts, and takes many forms besides the curious and the bizarre: the works about Shakespeare run neck and neck with new editions of his works. May not his apparent typographic allusions, culled by Blades, have been written with a wink at posterity, which was to devote so much ink and paper to these publications?

The first quarto play, "Titus Andronicus," appeared in 1594, from the press of John Danton: the first collected edition, the First Folio, was printed in 1623 by Isaac Jaggard and Richard Blount: from that time to this the press has served Shakespeare's fame and been served by it. In large size and in small, the plays have been printed in every conceivable form, and to fit every shelf and every pocket. It is the latter, perhaps, which are dearest to the reader of Shakespeare. Who, of adult readers, has not known and loved the little red Temple edition? It has been revamped of late years, but the newer volumes somehow haven't the charm of the old, even when the latter, on their rough paper, were printed from electrotype plates obviously much worn out. This may be sentimentality, but then in those days there was the dreadful Rolfe edition. . . .

Out of a past as remote as the Rolfe books comes a new volume in that gigantic task which the late H. H. Furness essayed in 1871, the Variorum edition of the plays. In this series (appealing neither to the pocket nor the reader) the "Poems," edited by Hyder E. Rollins, appeared last year. Typographically the volumes in the Variorum edition are more ingenious and laborious than attractive, but in the long list of works of Shakespearean scholarship they take high rank.

Another recent scholarly work, bibliographical and not exegetical, is Miss Henrietta Bartlett's revision of her "Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto," 1594-1709, which, in collaboration with Alfred W. Pollard, was issued in 1916. The present work de-

scribes and places all known extant copies of the Quarto, being a completely indexed guide for the bibliographer and the librarian.

These are hierarchical books, and the Shakespeare industry depends for its continued prosperity upon the publication of the poet's own plays. Several current editions are at hand to attest the publishers' faith in the public demand. The Cambridge Edition of "King Richard II," edited by John Dover Wilson, is the most pretentious (if one may use the term) of the smaller or pocket-size volumes. The format was designed some years ago by Bruce Rogers in a type which seems a bit small for easy reading, although one which permits of a charmingly open and inviting page. More than half the book is given over to introduction and notes, which, however important they are, tend to bulk rather beyond the proper limits of a pocket book. The paper is mellow in tone, and the cloth binding serviceable.

A slighter volume, with much the same type face, is the new series issued by Ginn & Co., under the editorship of Professor Kittredge. The paper is a little too white and the blue cloth binding a little too anemic to be wholly satisfactory: there is a bit too much of the "text book" look to it. These defects could easily have been remedied, for the type page is good and the book easy to handle. The apparatus occupies about half the book, and there is a good glossarial index.

The third of the pocket volumes is the Penguin Shakespeare, edited by G. B. Harrison. The text has been carefully reconstructed from the original folios and quartos, and, selling at sixpence each, the publishers claim that the Penguin Shakespeare is the only reprinting of the original text issued at a low price. About eighteen plays have been issued so far, bound in stiff paper covers printed in red and black. The type is of good size, and the paper and presswork would be creditable in much higher priced books. The most recent addition is "Introducing Shakespeare," written by the editor, and printed in larger type. The Penguin Shakespeare sells, I believe, for a quarter in this country, and is a grand buy for the money.

Most important in the list of new Shakespeare issues is that in process of publication by The Limited Editions Club in something under two thousand sets of thirty-seven volumes, folio. The editor is Herbert Farjeon (a grandson of Joe Jefferson), the designer is Bruce Rogers, and the illustrations are by many hands. As among these various editors—Wilson, Harrison, Kittredge, Farjeon—a critic of typography may have no choice, although within the industry there are many prejudices; but even a casual "bardolater" would recognize the attractive features of this new edition.

As with the Penguin edition of the plays, the Limited Editions Club editing attempts to restore the original text: Mr. Farjeon says that he has

"done something never before attempted in the field of Shakespearean editorship. Substantially it is an Old Spelling and Old Punctuation text." The result is a slightly archaic flavor about the text which is subtly and skillfully reflected in the format. The L. E. C. "Hamlet" is not so much Hamlet in modern dress as Hamlet in costume of Shakespeare's period streamlined by a modern tailor. The type is a new reproduction of the seventeenth century Janson face, faithful in essence and in many details, but enriched by some new charms—while retaining more than a suggestion of Blount and Jaggard's printing office. Every element in the books is modern, but showing pride in its legitimate lineage. Even the binding paper is redrawn from the wall decoration in John Davenant's house at Oxford where Shakespeare often stayed. Mr. Rogers's sense of the fitness of things is well shown in these harmonies of type and binding.

Each of the thirty-seven volumes will be illustrated by a different illustrator, including Americans and those from foreign countries. The list is notable, including most of the famous artists of the day, but it is impossible here properly to evaluate their work. On the completion of the series a critique of this important gallery of illustrations will be in order.

This edition of Shakespeare is, I feel sure, the best, typographically, which has ever been printed. The

paper is not of superlative quality, and the binding is not as durable as one could wish, but I know of no other edition which is at once so imposing and so efficiently put together.

It is interesting to speculate on the part which printers will play in the next steps in the Shakespeare industry. It seems as if every possible change had been rung from the cheapest Woolworth rubbish to the sumptuous editions in which the present has no monopoly, but for which, apparently, the demand never slackens. With his fine indifference to chronology Shakespeare makes Jack Cade accuse Lord Saye of corrupting the youth of the land by erecting schools and establishing a printing press; as long as there are schools and a printing press we shall have new editions of Shakespeare.

## Silver State

*MONTANA: A State Guide Book. By the Federal Writers' Project of the Work Projects Administration for Montana. New York: The Viking Press. 1939. 429 pp., with index. \$2.50.*

Reviewed by FLORENCE W. STEPHENS

A LOT of effort by a lot of people is evident in the profusely illustrated guide book for the State of Montana, compiled and written by the Federal Writers' Project. Its directions for point-to-point tours haven't missed a clump of sage brush. Sandwiched in are bits of history which are sometimes based on legend but are always entertaining.

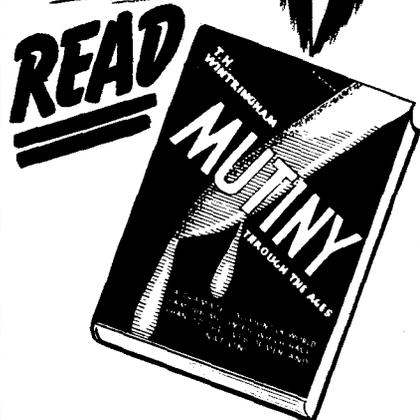
Although the main portion of the guide is given over to the tours, there is information on the flora, fauna, and natural resources, which is brief and well written. A glossary of local terms includes definitions such as "Roll your bed!—You're fired," and "Slow elk—Beef butchered without the owner's knowledge."

Montana has had a colorful history and periods of violence have been interspersed with those of almost miraculous development. Some of this has been caught, but much of the historical information is verbose and rambling. Then, too, the personal opinions of the writers on labor and religion is too evident. Accounts of labor difficulties border on propaganda.

Probably written by Montana people, the book omits things common to them but peculiar to the locality. This is especially true of the illustrations, of which there are too many that mean nothing. A farm boy mounted on a horse, a field of wheat, a thresher, could have been photographed anywhere, East or West, but nowhere is there a picture of a butte, a coulee, or a strip of badlands. Regardless of these defects, one cannot read this guide book without having a desire to travel the historic trails, and a tourist following the careful directions would come away with an enlarged understanding of the West.

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