

# Profile of a Booklover

BY BEN ABRAMSON

WHEN Dick Madden first walked into my bookshop fifteen years ago, he would not have impressed anybody as a success. He wore the uniform of a cab-driver and the air of one who lived in the moment. Nor could he have been suspected of Villonesque dreams or philosophic superiority to his lot. He carried under his arm two back numbers of *Western Story* magazine. These he wanted to trade for one back number of another western story magazine.

Well, the evening was drizzly, business was slack, and I was in a talkative mood. Besides, Dick Madden's face inspired talk. It was the kind of face one instantly pictures when one thinks of an Irishman. His voice, too, was typically Irish, although the brogue had been flattened somewhat by two generations of American ancestors.

We talked of general things for a while and I learned that he had been a sheet-metal worker but that trade had fallen off to such a degree that he had taken to cab-driving. I asked him if it was true, as the sign in his cab stated, that a cab-driver is chosen for his carefulness and his courtesy. Dick said he supposed so and then began to tell me something of the life of a cab-driver. He told me of the fierce competition for fares, of transporting strange people on unknown errands, of waging verbal warfare with traffic policemen. And I came to feel that whatever the requirements of the company may be, a cab-driver is chosen by the gods for his audacity.

Dick Madden had fire. It was unsuspected and feebly fed with poor fuel, but it was fire just the same. His mind was uncomplicated by any misgivings about the past or by fear for the future. In his free time he sought such pleasures as were accessible to him; they were not of an exalted nature and they did not reach the roots of his being, but they passed the time. It seemed to me that Dick was a cab-driver and a sheet-metal worker only by chance. By nature he was an adventurer, whose field at the moment was limited and whose imagination was entirely undeveloped.

Some obscure groping for symmetry led me to talk to that impassive but formidable face, that apotheosis of all Irish faces, about Irish literature. I found myself telling him about books in which I had not the slightest expectation he would become interested. I talked of poetry and prose, of fiction and fancy, of fairy lore, of Yeats and Dunsany and James Stephens and

Synge. I asked Dick if he had ever heard of Wolfe Tone. He had not. I asked him if he knew "The Book of the Four Masters" and "The Book of Kels." He did not. I asked him what he knew of Daniel O'Connell, of Clarence Mangan, of Parnell, of patriots and politicians, of Irish kings and queens, of writers and statesmen who had become enduring symbols of Irish life. He had heard of none of these, he had read none of their works.

Instead of a western story magazine, it was a second-hand copy of a short history of Ireland that he finally bought and took home with him.

A few days later he came back, excited about the things that he had learned, the men and women he had met in the pages of that small book. Every few days he came in to get more books about Ireland—all cheap second-hand copies. Once I showed him a copy of "King Goshawk and the Birds," by Eimar O'Duffy. It is as rare and delicate a novel, both in theme and in manner, as I could have hit upon. He asked me to wrap it up. The next time he came in he remarked that O'Duffy was a guy who had the right idea. But where he himself had found out about the right idea, he did not explain.

He took more Irish books—histories, biographies, novels, plays, and poetry. I was exhilarated by my success—and his. I felt like Pygmalion. Yet the role I played was almost the reverse of Pygmalion's. Instead of animating a senseless block of marble and converting it into perishable flesh, I confronted a living and very vital person with the monuments of literature. They might well have turned him to stone. If he had not had stuff, he would have taken one quick look at them and been overwhelmed and discouraged. And ever afterward he would have been dissatisfied with himself. But Dick Madden could take it.

I drew him out about the books he was reading. He was not only reading them but reading them for pleasure. And because he took pleasure in them, he was learning more about Irish literature in those months than most serious students learn in years. He was still a cab-driver and he was still Dick Madden—but more Dick Madden than he had ever been before; a hidden reservoir of responsiveness and passion in him had been touched.

As the months passed and we exchanged impressions, opinions, and judgments, I realized suddenly that it was he who was telling and teaching me, and not I him. He had far out-

stripped me in knowledge of Irish literature. With no incentive except an energetic interest, he was becoming an authority on the subject.

One day he came in to say goodbye. Cab-driving, he said, had become less profitable, and he had decided to go to California and try his fortune. He had crated his books and sent them on by freight. He had bought a bus ticket and he had \$85.00 left to sustain him while he was looking for work.

I received a postal card from him on his arrival and a short note a fortnight later, telling me he had not yet found work. About a year later I received a letter from one of my customers in California, saying he had run into a friend of mine, Dick Madden, who was operating a small book store called Madden's Barn.

I wrote to congratulate him on having become a bookseller. I wished him success and asked him to write me often. This he did not do. Dick is not a very good correspondent. As the years passed I had occasional news, sometimes from him, sometimes from my customers and friends in California who had met him. I had no full details. All I knew was that he was getting on.

And then one day last year, without warning, Dick walked into the shop and told me the story of his twelve years in the west. In Los Angeles he had tried to get a job first at sheet-metal work, then as cab-driver. He was unsuccessful. His funds were running low and he was ready to turn his hand to anything. One day while walking in the neighborhood where he was living, he saw a group in some altercation. He discovered that the landlord of a vacant building had accused some boys in the neighborhood of breaking into the store and taking electric light and plumbing fixtures. Dick had an idea and talked it over with the landlord. The upshot of it was that he was given permission to sleep in the store, and in return was to guard the place and keep the windows washed.

He had his crates of books delivered to the vacant store. One day, when he was almost penniless, he returned home at about three o'clock in the afternoon from hunting for a job. He remembered his books. They were his last resource. He opened a crate, constructed a crude stand, and lettered a sign which read ANY BOOK ON THIS STAND 15c. He put the stand near the doorway and waited. During the afternoon he sold three books and made enough money to buy food for nearly two days. The next day he opened a second crate and made another stand on which he put a sign reading ANY BOOK ON THIS STAND 25c. That day he sold a few more

books. He continued returning early each day from job-hunting.

One day a man stopped in to look over the books. He noticed that all of them were about Ireland or by Irish writers, and he asked Dick if he had any more. There were two crates more; Dick opened them and spoke with authority of their contents and their merits. The man bought several books and paid good prices. This incident encouraged Dick to continue as a bookseller. He talked with the landlord and agreed to pay a percentage of his sales as rent. He had enough money now to have the electricity turned on. The grocer next door agreed to supply him with as many egg crates as he needed for shelves.

Dick spent his mornings searching in second-hand furniture stores and in booksellers' shops for Irish books. He built up a small but active trade. Meanwhile, he continued to read Irish literature.

One day a priest walked by, noticed the shop, and came in. He looked over the books, then fell into conversation with Dick. Learning that Dick was an authority on Irish literature, the priest offered to pay him \$10 each for a series of lectures on the subject. Dick agreed. His platform manner was remarkable in that it was his own natural manner transferred to the platform. And this manner was fully as effective with the people of sunny California as it had been with an audience of one bookseller on that drizzly evening many years ago. He obtained other engagements and soon he was addressing not only small church groups but women's clubs and other large organizations. He increased his stock of books but saw no reason for leaving his shop in the one large, barn-like room.

Once a customer brought a famous Irish moving picture actor to Dick's place. The actor bought many books and later introduced other people to the shop. The studios discovered Dick and called him in as consultant when they needed technical information about Irish speech or Irish scenes. His revenue from this and other activities, while not imposing, enabled him to live comfortably. Soon he moved to a better business location and accumulated a larger stock. Liam O'Flaherty met Dick while he was in Hollywood working on his picture, "The Informer." The two Irishmen found that they were kinsmen in more than the racial sense. Dick was prospering, and not only materially.

At this point, if the success story followed the usual pattern, Dick should have met the daughter of Hollywood's richest producer, married her, and come into possession of a solid gold Packard and a house in Beverly

Hills. But Dick's success does not conform to the conventional formula.

He did meet a girl and he did marry her. She was a clerk in the drug store on the corner nearest his shop. She was intelligent and she shared Dick's interest in books. Together they entered upon a rich and varied life, and their pleasures were founded upon congenial tastes that could be gratified at very little monetary expense.

As his business expanded, Dick hired clerks and continued to prosper for a couple of years. Then the depression came and he barely managed to keep his shop going for another year or two. Finally he decided that it was not worth while to hold on any longer. He liquidated his stock, paid off his debts, shipped the books he wanted to keep back to Chicago, and bought bus tickets for himself and his wife.

They had arrived in Chicago the day before he came in to see me. He had gone to the Sheet Metal Workers Union, renewed his dormant membership, and obtained employment. He told me that he was going to begin cutting metal again the next day. He had \$400 and his books. The books were better editions than the ones he had when he went to California, but their value was not considerable. Financially, he was not much farther ahead than he had been ten years ago.

Life is often called a "game" or a "race." According to this philosophy, if a man does not win the pot he is a loser. If he does not forge ahead, he falls behind. According to this standard, Dick Madden is not a success. Yet he has improved himself and his life. He has come up in the world. Materially, he has made no progress, but he has something he cannot lose, something that no business reverses can take away from him. He has an interest that gives point to his life. He is still the same Dick Madden, essentially; he will never stop being that because he will never come to the end of himself. His speech is more precise than it used to be, but it has lost none of its force. He has won many good friends among the kind of people who are worth knowing. He has influenced many people, not with calculated technique, but in the course of his own growth. He can visit them and enrich their lives without impoverishing himself.

He is still asked, from time to time, to deliver talks on Irish literature. He is still sought out as a person of solid worth and attainments. His maturity keeps pace with his age. He has the dignity that comes from the acquisition of important knowledges, and the wisdom that asks little of the external world. His life is full, and whatever fortune may have in store for him, his future is secure.

## Freedom of the Air

(Continued from page 4)

ate decalogues of their own for the guidance of those using their microphones. But until recently no attempt was made to arrive at uniform rules. The official rebukes which followed the Mae West and Charlie McCarthy episode and the Orson Welles Martian broadcast, as well as the short-term licenses, have had their logical effect. The National Association of Broadcasters has adopted a Code of Standards applicable to the industry. The code contains general statements of policy on standards of ethics and good taste to be observed by member stations. Here is a summary:

(1) Children's programs are to be closely supervised. They are to be based upon "sound social concepts."

(2) Stations are to provide time for the presentation of public questions, including those of a controversial nature, with fairness to all elements in a given controversy. But time is not to be sold for debatable issues except for political broadcasts.

(3) The potentialities of radio as a means of education are to be studied and developed.

(4) News is to be presented with fairness and accuracy, and without editorial bias.

(5) Radio is not to be used "to convey attacks on race or religion."

(6) Only such commercial programs are to be broadcast as pertain to legitimate products or services, and comply with legal requirements, fair trade practices, and standards of good taste.

Here, as in the case of the Motion Picture Production Code, an ingenuous reader may be prompted to say: "Well, all this seems desirable enough." If the radio code were merely a declaration of principles for the guidance of stations few would quarrel with it. But the likelihood is that it will repeat the career of the Hays code. A board will be set up to enforce it; penalties will be devised; the accumulated decisions of the board will establish a complex of don'ts; there will be a regimentation of opinion; free speech will be crippled.

We hope we're wrong. It's not impossible that radio has learned something from the screen's example, and will not repeat its blunders. That remains to be seen.

A theoretical discussion of free speech, divorced from any consideration of medium, is futile. Each means of expression has its characteristics and adaptabilities, its influence for good or evil, its limitations. Free speech on the air is not free speech on the street corner.

What, then, is free speech on the radio? Is it the historic right to express one's views without previous restraint, subject only to subsequent



punishment for unlawful utterances? Or is it only the privilege to say what does not displease the stations, commercial sponsors, or the commission?

It is not essential at this point to decide whether, with respect to its obligation to deal impartially with all those who may seek its facilities, radio is a private enterprise or something akin to a public utility. A private enterprise has the right, ordinarily, to refuse to deal with anyone not acceptable to it. If a newspaper declines a paid advertisement, if a periodical rejects a manuscript, if a picture gallery refuses to hang a painting, or if a theater decides not to exhibit a film, that is not censorship. But where a private enterprise—though not required by law to deal with all those who may offer—is of such nature and magnitude as to render the availability of its facilities a social necessity, and denies equal treatment to all applicants, can it be reasonably urged no censorship exists?

If the commission revokes the license of a station whose program policy it doesn't favor, have we not a situation similar to that of a newspaper which is sought to be suppressed by injunction for its supposed libelous content—an attempt which was so vigorously denounced by the Supreme Court of the United States in *Near versus Minnesota*? Is it an answer that the commission cannot with impunity infringe free speech because the aggrieved person can always go to court? What good does it do a man to have a right which may be curtailed at any time by official caprice, so that he has to go to law for vindication? Is not the very purpose of constitutional guaranties to place certain fundamental rights conclusively beyond the pale of bureaucratic interference?

Nothing has ever divided believers in the Bill of Rights as sharply as the question of radio.

There are some people who profess a fervent belief in unfettered expression in every medium—speech, writings, stage, screen—and yet shake their heads in doubt when it comes to radio. They say that historic notions of liberty cannot be applied to the air. Their thesis runs something like this:

A hundred years ago free speech meant that a man who wanted to say something could pause at a chosen place, gather a crowd, and shout his piece to his heart's content. Those who fought for and won the Bill of Rights in England, and those here in America who put that document into the First Amendment, saw no reason to concern themselves overmuch with the perils of intemperate utterance.

They were wise enough to realize that a man's voice could carry just so far; that there was a limit to the number of possible listeners; that if a fool or rogue got up to rant, whatever mischief he did could be counteracted by other speakers free to rise in denial, and by the common sense of the community. His auditors could question him, heckle him, contradict his assertions, probe into his motives, explode his logic; people in the vicinage could shun the sound of his voice if they wished. And were he to vociferate twenty-four hours a day his circle of influence would still be limited. So in the long run two things were apt to be assured: unhampered discussion and the preservation of some kind of social balance.

Applied to radio (the argument runs on) this concept of free speech loses meaning. When a speaker steps before a microphone, though it be on a single occasion, he addresses not hundreds or thousands of hundreds of thousands, but many millions. The ether provides him with an impenetrable bastion. While he speaks he cannot be assaulted with questions or ridiculed or driven to cover. He holds in his grasp an instrument more terrible than the thunderbolts of Jove; he can wreak untold harm and havoc within the space of an hour. He can whip uncounted multitudes to hysteria, terror, loathing, violence.

When Milton urged in the "Areopagitica" that truth and error be allowed to grapple, because truth would win eventually, he envisaged an even-handed encounter. But truth and tolerance cannot fight falsehood, demagoguery, and vigilantism on equal terms on the air. We are not justified in supposing that listeners whose minds are infected by a Coughlin or a Mosley listen to the other side as well. We cannot make radio an effective market place of ideas good and bad because we are not at all sure that reason will always correct folly. The microphone (it is concluded) is so dangerous an instrumentality that in dealing with it we must discard the principle of unfettered discussion and formulate restrictions of some kind.

Because this argument sounds so plausible, it is doubly treacherous. Carried to its logical conclusion, it may be used to justify almost any suppression. Its structure rests on the quicksands of the size of audience. It makes liberty a matter of arithmetic. It is the offspring of cowardice, compromise, and fear. It would barter principle for expediency. In the early days of printing, controversial pamphlets reached only hundreds. Today an author addresses hundreds of thousands. Shall we say that, ours being

an age of mass communication, free speech should be scrapped?

If we reject the argument, what is the alternative that faces us? We cannot escape the fact that the physical limitations of radio are such as to require a central supervisory authority if chaos is to be averted. Maybe ten or twenty years from now there will be an unlimited number of available wave lengths. Then the question of censorship will be simplified.

But before that day comes, what criteria should guide the authority in granting, suspending, revoking, and renewing licenses? Can the criteria be limited solely to financial and technical considerations? If program content is to be ignored, are we certain the social good will thus best be served?

Many liberals insist that program content should be a yardstick, and that stations espousing the democratic ideal should be favored. Here, too, we get involved in a confusion of terms. The "democratic ideal" is one thing to Girdler and Ford, and another to a miner in bloody Harlan or a sharecropper. But let us assume that democracy means political, civil, and religious liberties, economic as well as political majority rule, equality of economic opportunity, freedom for social change through the procedures of majority rule, recognition of the dignity and responsibility of the individual.

When we say that we should favor programs in the democratic tradition, does that mean that we should frown on antidemocratic utterances? Shall we deny the microphone to the Coughlins, the Kuhns, the Leninists? What happens then to the principle, exposed by Voltaire and many others, of fighting for the other fellow's right to speak even though we disagree with him utterly?

If it is true, and we think it is, that it is socially wise to pour all kinds of ideas into the crucible of conflict, adding the ingredients of skepticism, scrutiny, testing by experience, evaluation, so that the dross of the spurious may be cast off and the gold of enduring values disengaged, then a free radio dedicated to the cause of democracy means diversity of opinion on the air. So long as the ether is a market place for many points of view we need not fear that prophets of reaction, the demagogues, the hate mongers any more than the psychopaths who burst into print now and then, only to be promptly consigned to oblivion by the common sense of society.

*The foregoing article is condensed from a chapter of the forthcoming book, "The Censor Marches On," by Morris L. Ernst and Alexander Lindsey, to be published by Doubleday, Doran.*

# The Compleat Collector

CONDUCTED BY JOHN T. WINTERICH

TWO copies of the 1603 quarto "Hamlet" are known. One is in the British Museum, the other in the Henry E. Huntington Library at San Marino, California. The British Museum copy lacks the title, the Huntington copy the final leaf. There is a story (it may be apocryphal, but there is a story none the less) that Henry E. Huntington once offered to match shillings with the Keeper of Printed Books in the British Museum on the basis that if the Keeper of Printed Books won, the B. M. was to have Mr. Huntington's "Hamlet" title leaf, and that if Mr. Huntington won he was to have the B. M. "Hamlet" final leaf. The Keeper of Printed Books austere-ly declined the offer.

Coronado will ride again in 1940. The Southwest, as a unit and as half a dozen sovereign States, will do his name honor. Anticipating the anniversary with its accustomed alertness both to what is going on and to what has gone on, the William L. Clements Library in the University of Michigan has just issued a pamphlet, "The Muster Roll and Equipment of the Expedition of Francisco Vazquez de Coronado," publishing the epochal document for the first time in an English translation, accompanied by a brief introduction by Arthur S. Aiton.

In February, 1540, at Compostela, Mexico, Coronado's force was drawn up in final formal array before its departure into the unknown north. Clerks made a thorough census of the outfit, listing not only the names of individuals but also the number of horses and full details of equipment. The score was 225 mounted men and 62 foot. Accountment comprised everything from coats of mail, cuirasses, crossbows, and harquebuses to

plain buckskin jackets and "arms of the country."

There were 552 horses. But Mr. Aiton discounts the possibility, biologically considered, "that stray horses from Coronado's expeditions stocked the Western plains with Spanish horses." There were only two mares in the group. There was also a single mule, who doubtless perished stridently at the foot of some Arizona mesa in utter unawareness of the comparative proximity of Missouri.

Science creates elaborate terminologies for itself and then leaps far ahead of them, never waiting for the terminologies to catch up. Victor Hugo Paltsits of the New York Public Library spoke recently before the convention of the Inter-American Bibliographical and Library Association at Washington and defined bibliography as "the correct description of books." The definition is so compactly simple that the uninitiated are likely to exclaim, "Oh, is *that* all it is?" But let anyone who can better it hurl the first odd volume at Mr. Paltsits. Incidentally Mr. Paltsits had the courage to quote himself as of 1905, when he declared: "Anyone can compile a list, many can make a catalogue, but very few can agonize to bring forth a bibliography." Obviously those words were wrung from the heart thirty-four years ago, and there is no less anguish in them today.

A New York insurance executive who had spent many years assembling a wholly orthodox and conventional collector's library recently felt the urge to explore uncharted streams. He asked a shrewd dealer for suggestions. "Why not," said the dealer, "collect books about insurance?"

Now that everybody who mails a letter is aware that 1939 marked the 300th anniversary of the introduction of printing into British America, it might be well to ponder for a moment the noble phrases whose reduction to type in 1639 has made the anniversary possible. No copy of the first production of the Cambridge press, "The Oath of a Free-Man," is known to survive, but approximations of the text exist, both in type and in manuscript, and we may be sure that the epochal broadside struck off by Stephen Daye read substantially as follows:

I (A.B.) being Gods providence, an Inhabitant, and Freeman, within the Jurisdiction of this Commonwealth, do freely acknowledge my self to be subject to the Government thereof: And therefore do here swear by the great and dreadful name of the Ever-living God, that I will be true and faithfull to the same, and will accordingly yield assistance & support thereunto, with my person and estate, as in equity I am bound; and will also truly en-

deavour to maintain and preserve all the liberties and priviledges thereof, submitting my self to the wholesome Lawes & Orders made and established by the same. And further, that I will not plot or practice any evil against it, or consent to any that shall so do; but will timely discover and reveal the same to lawfull Authority now here established. for the speedy preventing thereof.

Moreover, I doe solemnly bind my self in the sight of God, that when I shal be called to give my voyce touching any such matter of this State, in which Freeman are to deal, I will give my vote and suffrage as I shall judge in mine own conscience may best conduce and tend to the publike weal of the body, without respect of persons, or favour of any man. So help me God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The text as here cited follows that given by Lawrence C. Wroth of the John Carter Brown Library in an attractive little study issued by the Press of the Woolly Whale (Melbert B. Cary, Jr.) earlier in the anniversary year.

## Your Literary I. Q.

QUIZ No. 7

By HOWARD COLLINS

### 10 FAMOUS CLERGYMEN

From the earliest times to the present, the clergy have been prominent in the world's literature. Of the gentlemen of the cloth briefly described below, how many do you recognize? Allow 5 points for each one you can name, and another 5 if you can also name the book in which he appeared and its author. A score of 70 is par, 80 is good, 90 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 21.

1. The climate on Pago Pago proved too tropical for him.
2. Because of his high ecclesiastic standing, he was allowed to wear his long underwear at a nudist colony.
3. He bore the loss of his fortune, the seduction of his daughter, the burning of his home, and imprisonment for debt with unruffled cheerfulness.
4. He united in marriage the children of two hostile families.
5. After eight years of worrying about it, this minister publicly confessed his adultery.
6. A chubby little man, he was always carrying an umbrella and solving crimes.
7. Founder and head of an isolated monastery, he lived 250 years.
8. An aged lama, he wandered about India in search of the all-healing River of the Arrows.
9. A legendary friar, he appears in a novel and an operetta.
10. He converted a dancer and then wished he hadn't.

The delightful and rare art of the fable is at its best in

## The Satyr's Children

by EDITH FRANKLIN WYATT

First published in The Atlantic Monthly, and now in a small paper-bound (fifty cents) book, the Chicago Tribune said of it:

"... a lovely fable of the children of a satyr who were left fatherless and motherless, nurtured by a simple woodcutter's wife. They went to school with other children happily until their strangeness was discovered. The story is written with rare subtle beauty."

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