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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE
PRIVATE LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

The Future of Book Collecting
Desmond Flower

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Maggs Brothers: A Note

Association Affairs

Recent Private Press Books

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The Private Libraries Association

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The Private Libraries Association is a society of people interested in books from the amateur or professional point of view. Membership is open to all who pay one guinea on January 1st each year regardless of the date of enrolment.

Founded in 1956, the Association immediately organised the Exchange Scheme as a means of co-operation among collectors and students: *The Exchange List* is published four times a year.

The Private Library, begun in January 1957, has printed contributions from members and experts outside the society on a variety of subjects concerned with the world of books and the organisation of libraries at home.

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Publications

"Certain Styles of Bookbinding" by Howard M. Nixon is sent free of charge to members with this issue. Further copies may be obtained from the Publications Secretary, 41 Cuckoo Hill Road, Pinner, Middlesex, price 3s 6d per copy (5s to non-members).

Exchange List

Mr Walter F. Broome, F.L.A., has been appointed Honorary List Editor in succession to Mr Geoffrey Hamilton, who is compelled to resign through pressure of other commitments. We welcome Mr Broome to this post and would like to take this opportunity of thanking Mr Hamilton for all his work over the past two years.

London Meetings 1963-4

At the meeting on October 9th members are invited to talk about books from their own collections. On November 14th Mr. Alan Thomas will talk on the second-hand book trade.

THE FUTURE OF BOOK COLLECTING

Desmond Flower

Private Libraries Association, Presidential Address, April 1963: part 2

THE beginning of my activities coincided with the opening of a period during which the art, science or pastime of book-collecting has changed faster and more drastically than during any comparable period since there have been books to collect. Such rapidity or transformation is not, of course, confined to book collecting. The whole world is turning now at an indecent pace, usually in the wrong direction. And today the collecting of pictures, furniture, silver and *objects d'art* in general all show the same symptoms, which one cannot help regarding with a certain alarm.

John Carter's *Taste and Technique* is an admirable summing-up of the position half-way through these thirty years—counting the lost years of the war as time out. He wrote of a vital art or science in what

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I feel may prove to be the last of its heydays. His text, his advice and his views are as wise as one would expect from someone of his knowledge and perspicacity. But for all that, I hear the death knell tolling in a paragraph on pp. 64-65 which I will tear from its context. Speaking of the 1930's, he writes, 'If the gradual trend away from the general collection was making specialization in a single author, or in one or two authors, rather more frequent, this was progressive development, not an innovation.

'Perhaps not an innovation but certainly a distinct and notable change in bibliophilic strategy emerged as the decade wore on: specialization in a period. The textbook example of this rewarding compromise between the general and the particular is probably Lord Rothschild's eighteenth-century library. Here, in little more than a dozen years' collecting, has been demonstrated that the choice of a target strictly consonant not only with the available attention and means, but, more significantly, with the expectable availability of material is of fundamental importance in the planning of any collection.'

This is a true and an unexceptionable statement. But let us examine its implications. Lord Rothschild is a true collector; he is a scientist by profession; he loves books and he is a very rich man. By inclination he found himself interested in the eighteenth century, and in so short a time he assembled a remarkable collection. It is a collection which he, with all the funds at his disposal, could not repeat today. He has been unconsciously both one of the executioners of book-collecting and a distinguished mourner at its funeral.

I have seen many other mourners and executioners. My father is one. As I have said, he started to collect the works of George Frederic Handel immediately after the First World War. In those days almost the only collectors of music were in Germany—Heyer and Kinsky among them; Paul Hirsch was just beginning at the same time, but as you know from the catalogue of this superb collection, his interests were all-embracing—he was a wealthy man doing with music what others had done with literature a century or two before. But my father set about Handel as John Carter has described Rothschild setting about the eighteenth century. His collection was largely formed by the early thirties. Around that time Percy Muir, I remember, had an uncut, unopened mint copy of the first edition of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for which he was asking £25, and, as he pointed out, when one considers that this work in the hierarchy of art ranks with the first

quarto *Hamlet* or Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the comparison is ludicrous. My father was never a wealthy man; he was comfortably off at the time when he was collecting. But today Croesus, had he a mind to it, could not make a comparable collection of Handel's music because the stuff just isn't there. It is all tied up and accounted for, apart from the rare appearance of an odd volume which fetches a fantastic price.

I, too, in my way am one of the executioners and the mourners. When I began to collect Voltaire I entered the market at the right time and formed my library at a remarkably modest cost. Of course my collection cannot bear comparison with my father's because only a few of my books—autograph manuscripts and presentation copies, for example—are unique. But it is some years now since I have made an addition of any importance. There is more interest in Voltaire than there used to be. It has become known that Theodore Besterman and I both collect him, costs have risen and as a result we have pretty well priced ourselves out of the market.

I have dwelt deliberately on two subjects out of the main stream—music and French literature—because I think the tragedy is that we are running out of subjects to collect which are worth collecting. We all see our children collect pebbles and shells on the shore during the summer vacation, and we all remember the day in the autumn when someone in the family says, 'let's get all this junk out of here'. I have an uneasy feeling that book-collecting may go the same way. One of the few really original collections of our lifetime has been made by Ian Fleming. He set out to bring together the first editions of all the books or manifestos which have been milestones, turning points in the life of mankind since printing was invented. Harvey's *Circulation of the Blood*, Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, Marx's *Das Kapital*, Wassermann's treatise on the treatment of syphilis, Edison Bell's first brochure advertising the telephone. A fascinating idea, brilliantly and successfully carried out. But now that Ian has done that, how many more fields remain?

Private houses throughout England and Scotland, and indeed throughout Europe, are still stuffed with good books. Ten years ago I stayed at Holkham with the Earl of Leicester, who allowed me to ransack the house when I was organizing an exhibition of a thousand years of French books in London. Apart from the well-known treasures which I borrowed—such as the most beautiful of all Grolier bindings, the magnificent four-volume Caesar which is now in the British Museum, I found an unrecorded early edition of Perrault's *Tales* in one of the lavatories, and I noticed in the attics up under the

roof not only most of Sir Christopher Hatton's library, but also twenty superbly bound volumes containing the biggest assembly of first quartos of the Restoration drama that I have ever seen.

For the same exhibition I wanted to borrow a set of the first edition of *The Three Musketeers* which had belonged to the Empress Marie Louise. But the French owner refused to lend it because he was reluctant to admit that he owned it. This was because the book's appearance in an exhibition might be taken as a manifestation of wealth. There is so much tax-dodging in France that the inspectors can name a figure based on any appearance of well-being, and it is up to the victim to prove if it is excessive. So the owners of fine libraries are inclined to be cagey, and in consequence France is full of unseen treasures.

Thus, in spite of all the gloomy prognostications, there is no dearth of books still in private hands; but if and when any of them come out on to the market, will they be for the likes of me—the ordinary, reasonably intelligent collector with a little money and much enthusiasm? I think not. This is the tragedy which we face.

The multi-millionaires in this country, plus a few in Europe, take care of all the highspots, and good luck to them. Wealth is made to be enjoyed, and buying fine books is a better way of using it than some I can think of. But the real menace to the medium private collector is the American institution—the university and college library. Book-seller friends here tell me they have standing orders from college libraries for any book in the S.T.C. or Wing. Apart from the fact that I can't imagine what they want most of these books for, I do not intend this as a criticism. I merely mean that, since all these books go on to shelves which they will never leave again, the pickings for the private collector must of necessity become slimmer and slimmer. Another factor is the law in the U.S.A. whereby collections eventually destined for an institution are subject to tax relief. Our law here is much more particular. And I foresee a further dangerous attack on us private collectors: by the librarians of the many new universities springing up in this country.

People will always collect books—in fact they will always collect. But what is worrying us all is whether the books available for them to collect will really be worth collecting. Frankly, I am doubtful. I believe that within our lifetime we will see the collecting of books reach the degree of nonsense which today characterizes the market for Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. Vast prices, which only the vastly wealthy individual or institution can afford, and the rest of us

reduced to the level of small boys swapping stamps. It is a gloomy thought, but I can see no alternative. A few of us will perspicaciously collect new writers; fewer still will pick the right ones, and will reap the reward in due course which they deserve. Every single field of any importance now attracts the attention of one or other or both of the classes of vultures I have mentioned—the rich man and the institution. I can just see two perfectly normal, healthy but not too well-heeled members of the Private Libraries Association getting down to it in the not too distant future—'I'll swap my imperfect 1635 Donne poems for your inscribed Dylan Thomas lacking backstrip'. That is what we may come to, and it would be an inglorious end to a glorious pastime.

There are still fields open to us, and there may well be one more whole generation of private collectors before we are finally swamped by institutional buying. At any rate we can feel reassured that we have the antiquarian booksellers on our side: they realize that much of the delights of their pleasant occupation will be lost if they have no clients left except an endless succession of university librarians. So I wish you all good hunting and may the woods and pastures still be full of game. I cannot echo Voltaire's words by urging you to '*écraser l'infame*' because the march of time is such that we can never crush it; but let us by active and imaginative collecting hold it at bay as long as possible.

THE PLANTIN LIBRARY

R. De Belser

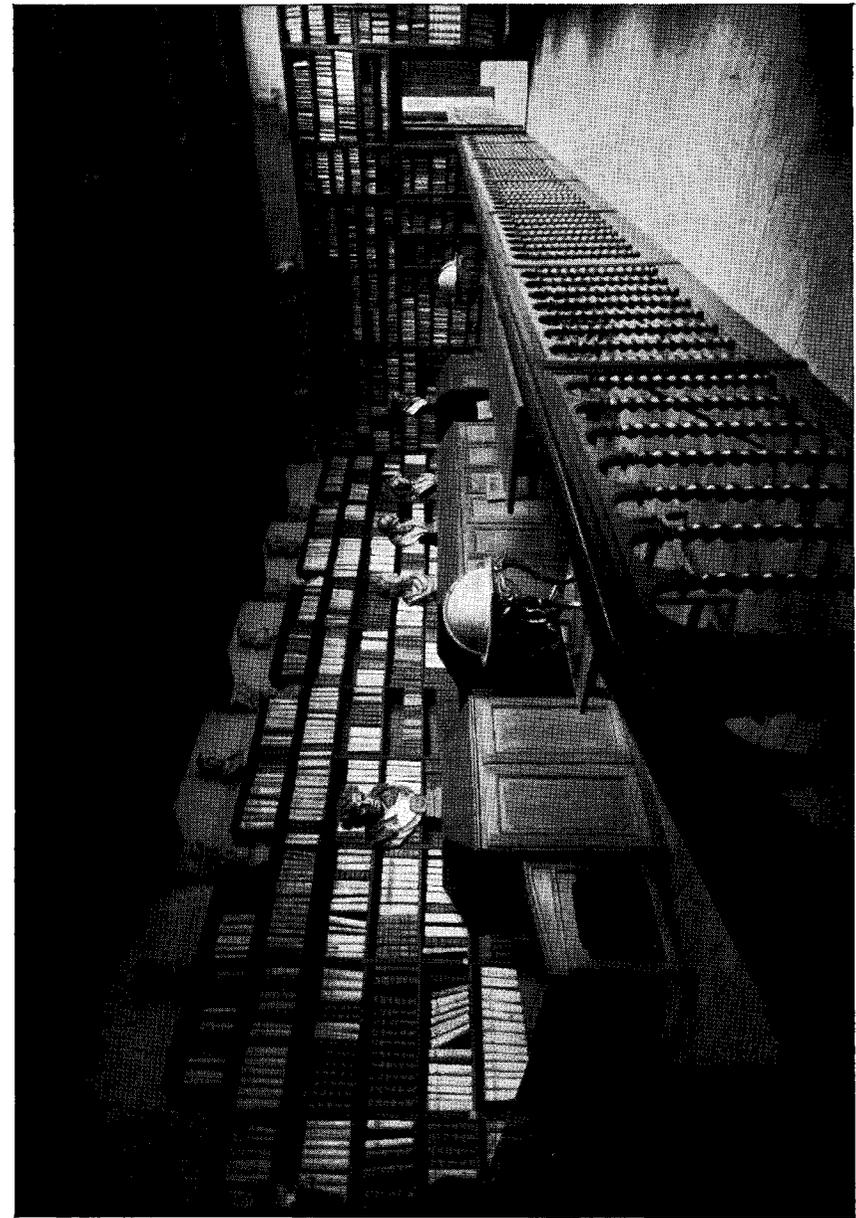
CHRISTOPHER PLANTIN was undoubtedly the greatest printer of his time and in the history of printing ranks among the few giant figures who have stamped the craft with the mark of their genius. When Plantin began his work in 1549, Antwerp held a place of honour in the history of printing in the Netherlands. The metropolis on the Scheldt had always been the intellectual capital of the Netherlands, and more than half of the books published in the Low Countries between 1500 and 1540 had been produced by Antwerp presses. Among the different styles of books handed down to us by the Flemish Renaissance, the works leaving the presses of Plantin bore the touch of typographical perfection. In theology nothing surpasses his Polyglot Bible;

no work on geography is more beautiful than the atlas of Ortelius; in matters relating to botany nothing can be compared with Plantin's herbals of Dodoens, Lobelius and Clusius; no work on philology excels his edition of Kilianus' dictionary; no treatise on chorography could be edited in a fashion more luxurious than the historical-geographical description of the Netherlands by Guicciardini.

The greater number of these magnificent books, witnesses to the titanic scientific effort of that time, whether printed by Plantin or by his contemporaries, are preserved in the richly stocked library of the founder of the *Golden Compasses*, and his successors, the Moretuses, added to the legacy of their great ancestor nearly the whole production of their time in the sphere of letters, art and science. Besides the numerous treatises on popular piety and the ascetic writings that were a speciality of Antwerp up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, most of the works written by such scholars as Lipsius, Baronius, Lessius and Cordelius during the reign of Albert and Isabella are found in the library. Moreover, a great number of books, printed between 1608 and 1645, show highly elaborate frontispieces designed by Rubens, who was the intimate friend of Balthasar Moretus I. Thus the Plantin library, with its 20,000 volumes, became a storehouse of writings on the arts and sciences of past centuries. After all, Plantin's famous printer's device *Labore et Constantia* (By work and constancy) could as well have been *Abundance and Quality*.

Features of the collection

Among the books issued from the Plantin press one cannot pass over in silence the *Biblia Regia* or *Biblia Polyglotta*, as it is not only Plantin's masterpiece, but at the same time the most important work ever produced in the Netherlands by one printer. This monumental theological work in eight large folio volumes comprises the complete Holy Writ in five languages (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac and Chaldaic) with detailed and precious appendices (Hebrew, Chaldaic, Syrian, Greek grammars and vocabularies; studies on the measures, costumes and habits of the old Hebrews, etc.). Plantin undertook this work by order of Philip II who sent the celebrated Spanish theologian and orientalist, Arias Montanus, to Antwerp to superintend and direct the work that lasted four years, from 1568 to 1572. In the meantime several other ecclesiastical works were made ready for the press, for in this field Plantin did not leave it at the edition of the Polyglot Bible. His relations with Philip II had procured him the monopoly for the sale of certain liturgical works in Spain and its colonies, and from 1572



The Great Library, Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp

onwards the newly appointed 'King's Proto-typographer' sent tens of thousands of missals, breviaries, diurnals, psalters, antiphoners to Philip II, who busied himself with their distribution and sale in his territories. All of them were masterpieces of their kind and were widely sold outside Spain and her colonies.

But even the abundant production of these liturgical works and of many other bibles in various languages did not absorb Plantin's energy completely. He still found the time, opportunity and capital necessary for the publication of a few of the best scientific and learned works of his time. His handbooks on botany became very successful. In 1565 he reprinted Dodoens's *Historia frumentorum*, which had previously been published by Jan van der Loe at Antwerp. The collaboration between Plantin and the celebrated Belgian botanist proved to be very fruitful: the *Historia frumentorum* was followed by the publication of several other works, the culmination of which was the Latin edition of Dodoens's *Herbal*, brought out in 1583 under the title of *Stirpiu Historiae Pemptades Sex*. A great number of the 1,305 wood-engravings in this work, showing plants and herbs, appeared for the first time; yet another part had been used before in the editions of Van der Loe and was bought by Plantin in 1581 from the widow of Dodoens's former printer. To the name of Dodoens should be added those of two other important botanists: Charles de l'Escluse or Clusius, whose collected works were published by the Plantin Press in 1601 under the title *Rariorum Plantarum Historia*, and Mathias de l'Obel or Lobelius, who spent a large part of his life in England before making Plantin's acquaintance and entrusting him with the publication of his *Plantarum seu stirpium historia* (1576) and of a Flemish edition of this work, which appeared in 1581 under the title of *Kruydtboeck*.

The Plantin Press also played a distinguished part in the field of geography and cartography by supplying numerous maps and atlases not only for the local market, but also to customers abroad. About 1540 the Southern Netherlands overtook Italy and Germany in this line, and maintained an international reputation through scholars such as Gemma Frisius, Mercator and Ortelius until 1590. Abraham Ortelius, one of the principal founders of modern geographical science, was an intimate friend of Plantin and of Jan Moretus. From the year 1558 his business connections with them were continuous, and, beginning in 1577, the *Officina Plantiniana* published a great number of atlases and other geographical works of the great cosmographer. His greatest work, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1579), went through many editions

in different languages, as did the *Epitomes* that alternated with this impressive atlas.

Gerard Mercator, the greatest name in geographical science since Ptolemy, is represented in the collection of the Museum by, among other things, the only copy known of his *Map of Flanders* (1540) and by his famous map-collection in three volumes, the *Tabulae geographicae*, the first part of which was published in 1585, the second one in 1590, both in Duisburg. In this work, that rejoiced in no less than forty-six editions, the denomination 'atlas' was used for the first time. Plantin himself never published any of Mercator's atlases; as a matter of fact the collaboration between the master-printer and the celebrated cartographer confined itself to the sale of globes and to the edition of Mercator's map of Europe of 1572.

Among other interesting features of the geographical collection in the Plantin House the *Speculum Orbis Terrarum* (1578) by Gerard de Jode, the publication of which the author took into his own hands, especially deserves our attention. Although it was a remarkable and fine atlas, in some instances even superior to those of Ortelius, it was obviously boycotted by the latter and his powerful friends.

For the sake of completeness we cannot omit mentioning either Haeyen's very rare *Amstelredamsche Zee-caerten*, which Plantin brought out in Leiden in the year 1585, or the 17th-century Dutch atlases by Blaeu and Jansson.

In the lexicographical field Plantin was once more privileged to have at hand a first-rate philologist in the person of his principal corrector Cornelis Kiel, or Kilianus. The Plantin Library possesses a copy of the second augmented edition of Kilianus' *Dictionarium teutonico-latinum* (1st ed., 1574; 2nd ed., 1588) that shows marginal annotations and corrections made by the author for a third edition. In 1572 Plantin had already given evidence of his special interest in philological science by publishing his well-known *Thesaurus Teutonicae linguae*. This work, being the first dictionary of the Dutch language, was compiled on the typographer's own initiative. 'This dictionary,' he said, 'will reveal to everyone the riches of this language, hitherto looked upon as poor.'

The Belgian surgeon André Vesal or Andreas Vesalius wrote the explanatory text to the magnificent series of anatomical plates engraved on copper by Pierre Huys, after Juan de Valverde, and published by Plantin in 1566 under the title *Vivae Imagines Partium Corporis Humani*. This Latin edition of the most important anatomical work of the Renaissance was followed in 1568 by a Flemish translation: *Anatomie*,

of levende beelden van de deelen des menschelicken lichaems. The manuscript of a Spanish edition, planned but never printed, is also preserved in the Plantin-Moretus Museum. It is to the *Vivae Imagines* that David van Mauden, reader in anatomy at Antwerp, subjoined the first scientific work on anatomy written in Flemish: the *Bedieninghe der Anatomien* (Plantin, 1583).

Between 1576 and 1582, in spite of the difficult years of war, important works still left Plantin's presses. Among these mention should be made of several notable music-books, the cream of which were the monumental *Masses* of Georges de la Hèle, published in 1578 under the title *VII Missae, quinque, sex et septum vocum*. These masses were composed from the leading motives of Orlando Lassus, C. de Rore, Th. Crequillon and Josquin des Prés. The woodcuts of the beautiful capital letters which Antoon van Leest engraved for this work still form a part of the collections of the Museum. During the same period appeared the interesting historico-geographical description of the Netherlands by Guicciardini (1581), numerous studies by the great humanist and Plantin's intimate friend Justus Lipsius, new editions of the emblem-books of Alciati, and scores of other books of this kind.

The Plantin Library contains not only Plantin and Antwerp works, but also a good deal of foreign printing. Visitors of the museum can admire in one of the showcases the pearl of a collection of about 150 incunables: the only copy known in Belgium of the 36-line Gutenberg Bible. The Elsevier Press is also well represented, with some 100 titles, not to forget about fifty works issued from the Manutius Press at Venice, more than sixty printings of the Estienne family, and beautiful editions by Bodoni, Didot, Jenson, Koberger, Zell and others. The Plantin House also acquired, in 1953, a unique collection of French literature of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries: 1,050 books in all, most of them being original or rare editions, bound in equally rare and precious *de luxe* bindings by renowned modern bookbinders such as A. Bauzonnet, F. Cuzin, Ch. De Samblanx, M. Lortic, A. Simier, G. Trautz and J. Weckesser. It was Max Horn, a Belgian bibliophile, who bequeathed this marvellous collection to the Plantin-Moretus Museum.

To conclude this survey, a few words about the department of manuscripts, composed of some 500 volumes. In order to edit the classical authors and the liturgical works as correctly as possible, Plantin and his successors, and in particular Balthasar Moretus I, spared no time, trouble or money to procure the old manuscripts dealing with these subjects. That is the reason why the visitor to the museum can

today be shown a magnificent series of manuscripts, extending from the ninth to the sixteenth century. These are interesting for the history and development of script, as well as for the study of manuscript illumination. Many of these manuscripts have, moreover, an indisputable intrinsic value for the textual study of old authors. An incomparably rich manuscript is the Bible of King Wenceslas of Bohemia, dating from 1401-1402 and representing one of the most striking specimens of the art of the Czech miniature-schools in their most glorious period. The illumination of this superb Latin Bible was ordered by Conrad de Vechta, mint-master at Kuttenberg in Bohemia, and was intended for the Emperor-King Wenceslas, whose insignia, the halcyon, appears on the first page. Of equal importance is the Chronicle of Froissart in three volumes, the frontispieces of which show wonderful examples of the Flemish fifteenth-century miniature-art. Apart from a less spectacular series of books of hours and examples of Gothic writing, the Museum glories in two early, well-preserved manuscripts: Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae* and Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale*, both dating from the ninth century and showing very good examples of the Carolingian script; and a fifteenth-century copy of *De la Vraye Amitié, de la Vieillesse et ses Offices* by Cicero, translated into French by the monk Laurent de Premierfait for the Duke Jean de Berry, son of the King of France (1340-1416), and for Louis, Duke of Burgundy, uncle of the king.

The last part of the library is occupied by the rich record collection. These records have proved themselves to be an inexhaustible mine of information for the history of the Plantin printing-house, of the art of printing in general, and even of the economic, social and cultural life of the Low Countries.

This summary and incomplete survey can of course give but a poor idea of all the treasures to be found in the Plantin Library at Antwerp. Nevertheless, we hope that it will induce the book-lover to concern himself more closely with the history and collections of the Plantin-Moretus Museum, this 'monument to the erudition and taste of generations of craftsmen' as Colin Clair paraphrases it in the epilogue to his excellent book on Christopher Plantin.

The Plantin Library is housed in the Plantin-Moretus Museum, Vrijdagmarkt 22, Antwerp, and is administered by the City of Antwerp. We are grateful to the Museum authorities for permission to reproduce the photograph of the Great Library shown in this issue.

COLLECTING ANDREW LANG

Roger Lancelyn Green

TO write about one's own collection is almost of necessity to be personal and autobiographical; yet to write about collecting one's favourite author would lose half its point if the subject were approached from a purely bibliographical standpoint. A bibliographical description may contain items of unique rarity which the collector does not possess; but an account of a personal collection can include descriptions of inscribed and association copies, and of manuscripts, with perfect propriety. My intention is to combine both methods as far as is practical.

From the point of view of bibliography, Andrew Lang's works consist of such a vast number of items that a large volume would be needed to deal adequately with them. Besides about 124 separate items—books, pamphlets and off-prints—there are more than twice that number of volumes containing prose contributions, prefaces or introductions by him; and there are literally thousands of uncollected articles and hundreds of uncollected verses and poems in the magazines, newspapers and literary ephemera of the period. All of these that I have been able to find, I have described at length in a bibliography running to about 800 pages: perhaps understandably, no publisher has yet offered to publish it. . . .

It is natural to ask why I have specialised in this way in a minor author in whom few readers or collectors take particular interest. The reasons are, I like to think, those which lead to the making of most book collections formed without any thought of monetary gain, but simply as a hobby, craze—or bibliomania.

As a boy my favourite author was Rider Haggard. I collected him as a reader anxious to read all that he had written—and then repeat the pleasure as often as I wished: I still do, and that pleasure is undimmed. But having secured copies (nearly all 'firsts', but many in poor condition) of his complete works of fiction, a new interest woke in me.

Among his books the one which stood out above all the rest, and seemed to me in my early 'teens to be among the greatest books ever written, was *The World's Desire* (1890) in which he collaborated with Andrew Lang. Haggard's admirable autobiography (*The Days of My Life*, 1926) told me who Lang was, and a good deal about him. But he was not quite unknown to me, since several ragged volumes of fairy-

tales, each named after the colour of its binding, survived from my father's childhood and had been 'nursery fare' from my earliest days.

What struck me in *The World's Desire* as much as anything else were the songs, written in charming and evocative lyric metres. I knew that Lang was a poet: 'Some of his poetry is remarkably beautiful', Haggard had written. It turned out that his *Poetical Works* (in 4 vols., 1923, edited by Mrs. Lang) were still obtainable, indeed 'remaindered', and they were easily secured.

But it was the purchase of Lang's book on book-collecting, *The Library* (1881), which was the real beginning of my collection. I found this on a bookstall in the market at Bath on March 31st (Lang's birthday, though I did not know it at the time!), 1936, and I purchased it for the sum of sixpence.

Further volumes of Lang's essays and his *History of English Literature* (1912) confirmed me in my devotion to 'Dear Andrew of the brindled hair' and made me determined both that I would be, like him, a book-collector, and that the foundation of my collection should consist of as complete a set of his works as I could amass.

My reasons were simple. I had already fallen under the charm of his writing: I wanted to read anything and everything that he had written—it did not much matter what the subject was, for I knew that he would make it interesting. (This I still hold to be true, though forced to admit that not *all* his writings on Scottish history have captivated me, and of his works *A History of Scotland* (in four volumes) alone remains unread.) From the point of view of the would-be collector, Lang seemed also the ideal choice. For I was then a schoolboy, shortly to become an undergraduate (at Lang's college, Merton—again purely by chance), and most of my collecting would have to be done from the trays on the pavement, the barrows in the Farringdon Road, the back cellars of Blackwell's, and the attics, inches deep in dust, where book were still stacked away in small, rambling shops both in Oxford and Liverpool, which were my chief hunting-grounds.

As Lang himself wrote about the book-collectors who in his day were seeking for the early editions of Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé*, 'the Poor Man has the nobler reason for his choice. He wants Perrault for love of Perrault himself, for love of those old tales that come to us so prettily. . . . Perchance some Poor Man may light on it in the Fourpenny Box, that Fortunatus's Cap of the lucky, that casket of Pandora, which always keeps Hope at the bottom of its dusty rubbish.'

Lang would have called himself an amateur book-collector (Oscar Wilde once nicknamed him 'the Divine Amateur'), for 'amateur' in the sense of one who loves characterized Lang in all that he did. The charm of his writings is the love of whatever subject he chose which shines through what he wrote—'he wrote more easily than he talked', said Haggard—and the charm of the man himself who becomes a very real and much-loved friend to the small band of those devoted to his works and all things connected with their writer.

So far as my own collection is concerned, Hope still dwells at the bottom of the Fourpenny Box—for I have never yet stumbled upon one of the really rare Lang items: the privately printed pamphlets and off-prints of which one or two copies only are known to exist now. Most of these are in either the University Library at St Andrews, which secured the cream of the Gosse and Esher Collections, and in the Indiana State Library, U.S.A., which bought the largest Lang collection ever made—that of C. M. Falconer of Dundee, sold at Sotheby's on December 11th, 1907. Thus St Andrews owns the only known copies of the 'copyright' pamphlet of eight pages called *The Mark of Cain*, by Hermann Boscher (Arrowsmith, Bristol, 1886), a parody of Ouida of which six copies were printed to secure the copyright in the title which was used later that year for Lang's novel *The Mark of Cain* (No. XIII of 'Arrowsmith's Bristol Library', also issued on Large Paper in an edition of 150 copies); and of the 'off-print' with special title-page of *William Young Sellar: A Brief Memoir* (1892) from Sellar's *Roman Poets of the Augustan Age: Horace*; while Indiana possesses unique copies of the printed *St Leonard's Magazine* (1863) issued while Lang was an undergraduate at St Andrews; of the anonymous, privately-printed play, *The Black Thief* (1882), written for his wife's nephews and nieces to act; and of the 'off-print' preface to the new edition of *Custom and Myth* (1898).

My own rarities of this sort were purchased later, when I was able to afford rather more than the back-street booksellers had to offer; but none of them is 'unique'. Rarest, perhaps, and certainly most desirable, is the privately-printed *Odyssey, Book VI*, no date or printer, bearing the inscription in Lang's hand: 'Experimental book of the Odyssey before alliance with Henry Butcher, A. Lang', which was printed in 1877. But Falconer's copy is at Indiana, and that which Lang gave to Jowett (who never 'opened' it) is in the Bodleian.

Interesting in a different way are the privately printed pamphlets issued by such collectors as T. J. Wise, Clement K. Shorter and W. F.



Andrew Lang's Bookplate Designed by Herbert Jones: 1894

Prideaux, usually in editions of from twelve to thirty copies: Wise, maybe, exceeded the numbers stated in his issues. However, I possess his reprint from the *Saturday Review* of *Lines on the Inaugural Meeting of the Shelley Society* (1886), both the ordinary edition on paper limited to thirty copies, and that on vellum, with the assurance on p.[ii]: 'Of the following lines Four Copies have been printed on vellum.' There is also a copy of *The Tercentenary of Izaak Walton* (one of 'a few copies for Private Circulation only') with an inscription in Wise's hand, dated 4/5/94, giving the book to Herbert Gorfin, who has written below: 'The first book given to me by T. J. Wise. H. E. Gorfin.'

Of more personal interest are the several books bearing inscriptions by Lang himself. Thus his first book, *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France* (1872) is inscribed: 'Florence Sellar—My very last pomes. A.L.'

January/71' (a slip for '72': the book was published on January 1st). This was given to a young cousin who was always asking him if he had written any more 'pomes'; she is remembered (as Mrs F. A. MacCunn) for her books on Sir Walter Scott and Mary Stuart. She gave it to me in October 1936—to take with me to Merton, whence Lang had sent it to her sixty-four years before.

A copy of the *Life of the Earl of Iddesleigh* (1890) bears the inscription: 'This Diverting Narrative of Adventure and Amour is presented to Mrs Hills by The Author, A.L.'; while a copy of *The World's Desire*, though it does not say to whom he gave it, bears these apologetic verses, probably inspired by W. E. Henley's slashing criticism of the book in *The National Observer*:

It did not set the Thames on fire,
It did not quite, the *World's Desire*,
Much rather did the public scoff,
And yell, to Nature, 'Take them off',
While Critics constantly conspire
To slate the hapless *World's Desire*.

A. Lang.

While Lang's books which were published in the ordinary way are not over difficult to find, there are one or two of surprising rarity among those published (or 'pirated') in the U.S.A., such as *A Cheap Nigger* (Hinds, New York, 1886) and *The Story of the Golden Fleece* (Altemus, U.S.A., Kelly, London, 1903), or in French translations: *La Mythologie* (Paris, 1886) and *Etudes Traditionnistes* (Paris, 1890). (The older collections possess these, but—readers please note!—they are wanting from my shelves.)

Of even more interest to the 'fine books' collector are the Large Paper editions of which only limited numbers were printed. Among the most interesting of these are *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889) and *The Red Fairy Book* (1891), editions of 113 numbered copies, each of which contains an Introduction not included in the ordinary editions.

Even the ordinary editions of the Fairy Books are hard to find in a good state, and are obviously being sought after now by others besides Lang enthusiasts. In the early days of my collection I paid as little as sixpence for some of these: recently I failed to secure a copy (not in mint condition) of the only one still missing, for thirty-five shillings.

A little easier to find are Lang's original children's books, though it seems impossible to discover a copy in really good condition of his first, *The Princess Nobody* (1884), with its beautiful coloured illustrations

by Richard Doyle. This was issued in the 'picture-book' style, bound in paper over boards, with a cloth spine—and the corners and edges are always worn and frayed.

This journey round my Lang shelves has left no space to tell of the lesser items in any Lang collection such as the volumes and numbers of periodicals containing uncollected articles by him. And, rarer still, the poems which were set to music and issued separately, or contributed to private 'magazines' such as *The Miscellany* at Oxford, and 'bazaar books', such as Punch's *In a Good Cause* (1900). And rarest of all, the MSS.: letters to various correspondents, originals of introductions or articles, of which a number still exist, and, almost unique, of the books themselves. Lang does not seem to have preserved the manuscript of any of his books. His portions of *The World's Desire* are included with the Haggard MSS. at the Norwich Castle Museum, but otherwise only his two posthumous volumes appear to have survived in manuscript: his *History of English Literature* in my collection, and *Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown*, at present untraced.

So it will be seen how rewarding an author Andrew Lang is to collect; how his works adapt themselves to suit the collector who seeks only to follow up a limited number of them—the Large Paper editions (there are forty books so issued, besides a few to which he wrote short prefaces), the children's books, his writings on sport—or on the Homeric Problem—or what you will. But the real enthusiast finds himself collecting a library, and not just a few shelves full. The best private library is that still being made by Mr B. Meredith Langstaff of New York, but my own probably comes second to his. And neither of us is ever likely to reach completeness: the periodicals and the books containing contributions by Lang are almost endless. Even of the major items (mostly pamphlets and off-prints) Mr Langstaff lacks about half a dozen, and I twice that number. Hope may still whisper of items waiting in dusty attics and market bookstalls—

'But ah! the fabled treasure flees:
Grown rarer with the fleeting years!'

MAGGS BROTHERS: A NOTE

THE birth of a firm may have such small beginnings and the process of evolution be so gradual, that it is sometimes almost impossible to fix, with any degree of certainty, the actual date of its inception. It was about 1850, however, when Uriah Maggs and his father left the village of Midsomer Norton in Somerset to start a new life in London. Uriah Maggs had always taken a keen interest in books, and when, after the failure of several ventures, he decided in 1853 to take up bookselling, it was natural that his own library should become the nucleus of his stock.

As in the case of many booksellers, he traded first from his own home, but, after some degree of success, opened his first bookshop in 1855 at 44 Westbourne Terrace North, Paddington. His trade plate is our earliest record of those days. It was found by a client in an old 'three-decker' and states that, besides dealing in secondhand books, Uriah Maggs also ran a circulating library and hired out newspapers! One must presume that the 'books and music bound' and the 'printing and engraving done to order' were both 'farmed out'.

From Westbourne Terrace North the business was moved after several years to Church Street, Paddington Green, a site now occupied by the Children's Hospital and almost opposite Greville House, once the residence of Lord Greville and Emma Hart, afterwards Lady Hamilton.

At the end of 1894 Uriah Maggs retired, leaving the business in the hands of his two elder sons, Benjamin and Henry.

In 1901 the growth of the firm, which had by that time changed its name to 'Maggs Bros', necessitated a further move, this time to 109 Strand, within a few hundred yards of Holywell Street, commonly known as 'Booksellers' Row'. Catalogues were now a regular feature, embracing not only books but also manuscripts, autograph letters and prints, and to scan their pages in the light of present-day prices is a revelation. In catalogue No. 188 issued in 1902, we notice an interesting side-line—coronation seats—'we still have some seats available to view the procession. Prices on application'.

Henry died in 1906, and in the same year two other sons of the founder, Charles and Ernest, became partners in the firm. Additional premises were taken at 6 Maiden Lane, Strand, and these were retained until 1918 when the firm moved close to Bond Street, following in the steps of Sotheby's who had moved their Auction Rooms from

Wellington Street, Strand, to Bond Street. Extensive premises were taken at 34 and 35 Conduit Street (part of the site now occupied by the Westbury Hotel). Four years later Charles died, leaving as partners his brothers Benjamin and Ernest, the eldest and youngest sons of the founder.

A branch was subsequently opened in Paris at 130 Boulevard Haussmann, later moving to 93 and 95 Rue la Boetie. In 1935 the firm became a private limited company when Frank and Kenneth Maggs, the two eldest surviving sons of Benjamin, were appointed joint directors with the two surviving partners. Benjamin died in 1936, after nearly sixty years in the book trade.

In 1938 a further move became necessary owing to the threatened demolition of the Conduit Street premises, and 50 Berkeley Square was chosen as the firm's new home. This move proved providential as 34 and 35 Conduit Street were soon to be entirely demolished, not by the housebreakers, but by Hitler's Luftwaffe. Nor did 50 Berkeley Square altogether escape. A bomb fell on No. 49, exploding against the party wall, destroying that building and part of No. 50, including the stairs, part of the stock being scattered over the debris next door. When everything appeared to have been salvaged another item was noticed among the rubble, and, on being retrieved, was found to be one of the most valuable items of the stock, a document signed by Sir Francis Drake. Incendiary bombs that fell on the premises were extinguished without doing much damage.

During the past 110 years, over 800 catalogues have been issued, many of a specialist nature which now rank as bibliographies, and the firm endeavours with its current catalogues to maintain this standard.

At present there are in the business two grandsons of the founder, Frank and Clifford Maggs, and three great-grandsons, John and Bryan Maggs and Terence Barley.

Frank Maggs, the managing director, joined the business in 1915, and his memories of it go back to 1905 when he started to help his father during the school holidays.

RECENT PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS

Books from the Vine Press will always bear the closest and most critical study, and the latest, *Design and Tradition*¹ by Sir Herbert Read, stands up well enough to such scrutiny, though it is not so well conceived over all, I think, as previous books from the press. The text may be thought rather dull by some, but gains considerably in interest by being set in the new type face Octavian designed by Will Carter and David Kindersley. There is a wood-engraved portrait of the author for frontispiece, and a pleasant binding, half cloth with patterned paper boards and dark brown Ingres endpapers, by Grey of Cambridge.

In quite a different style is *A Mediaeval Dream Book*², translated by Brian Cron, printed and bound by Morris Cox at the Gogmagog press. A brilliantly executed binding in black and white patterned cloth opens into nightmarish endpapers. These are followed by a double-spread title, covered with mediaeval dream symbols, and then the sixteen pages of text, in Latin and English, set between spiky borders of Calypso flowers. The type is very slightly over-inked in places, and the flowers are perhaps not as mediaeval in feeling as the rest of the book, but this is still a most satisfying and desirable piece.

Tom Rae has reprinted *Public Dinners*³ from *Sketches by Boz*, to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Dickens. The text is well printed in Perpetua, (with a large Westminster initial in turquoise to mark the beginning), and there is a very ingenious and pleasing arrangement of half-title and title, including a line block of the appropriate Cruikshank illustration. The binding, in white Linson, opens most comfortably, but one wishes it had been possible to have the title and device blocked in gold instead of printed in turquoise – effective though this still is.

The Ark Press is producing a series of worthwhile new texts, richly illustrated and well printed, at a very modest guinea a time. These are unlimited editions, commercially produced, designed by the owner of the press, Kim Taylor: *press books* in the way that the Nonesuch books were. The most recent of these is *Labour of Love*⁴, “one aspect of the autobiography of Michael Adam”, with as many as thirty-one coarse, but effective woodcuts by Robert Wyss. Well up to the high standard of the rest of the series; the wise collector would put in a standing order to receive each new volume as it comes out.

The Golden Head Press also has its books printed commercially, in this case to Raymond Lister's designs. *Peremia*⁵ a poem by Francis Warner, is set in Gill Sans in a very tall format, with three wood-engravings by Lister, and is sewn into grey card covers in the unlimited edition, or in a special binding for the twenty special copies. *The Miniature Defined*⁶ is an interesting essay by Raymond Lister defining the aesthetics and limitations of the miniature with six half-tone illustrations on art paper. Unfortunately the text was printed on a hard hand-made paper which was not damped before printing, and this has resulted in some poor presswork. The whole edition is sewn into stiff grey card covers. *Grongar Hill*⁷ the eighteenth century topographical poem by John Dyer, is a much more successful production. Set in Walbaum, with Castellar for the title and initials, and with nine wood-engravings by Pamela Hughes, it is excellently printed by Severs of Cambridge in brown and black on Basingwerk Parchment. The unlimited edition is sewn into yellow paper wrappers; the twenty copies signed by the artist are bound in yellow buckram.

Although it started as a true private press, the Dolmen Press has had so successful a career that it has now really become a small commercial publishing and printing firm—still adventurous, but hardly private. Probably the only one of its recent books to bear the stamp of a privately printed work is *Forget-me-not*⁸, a poem by Austin Clarke, set in Poliphilus and Blado types, well printed in red and black, and sewn into marbled paper wrappers. One of the more successful of the press's books, with a much better impression than usual.

One of the most industrious of the “dining room printers” recently has been Toni Savage at the Pandora Press. He has produced three more of his pleasant twelve page pamphlet poems illustrated with drawings by Rigby Graham printed in colour: *Serenade*⁹ by Oscar Wilde, *Thoughts in a garden*¹⁰ by Andrew Marvell, and *Where his Lady keeps his hart*¹¹, an Elizabethan love song; all very well designed and printed, although the impression on the antique paper used for the last is not so good as that obtained on the

smoother paper used for the others. Two much more ambitious, and on the whole very successful, works have been printed on the same small flatbed press. The first, Thea Scott's essay on the topography and wild life of Staffa, *Fingal's Cave*¹², is a remarkable *tour de force*, set in Walbaum, very nicely and evenly printed on pages so large, (10 × 8½ inches), that they had to be printed one at a time and side-stitched into the blue cloth boards. Apart from the excellence of the printing, the book is rich with twelve multi-coloured illustrations by Rigby Graham, printed from linocuts, rubber cuts and line-blocks. The other, more recent book, *A Sicilian Memory*¹³, is an essay by Penelope Holt. Smaller in page size, matching the pamphlets, it is not quite so evenly printed—though the eleven two-colour illustrations by Graham again enliven the pages, and the quarter morocco binding with Elephant Hide paper covered boards has some fine gold blocking. Finally, the latest booklet from the press is, very suitably, an essay on *Rigby Graham*¹⁴ himself, by Toni Savage and Hugh Collinson, produced for an exhibition of the artist's work in Leicester in May. Perfect bound into grey paper wrappers, this is perhaps one of the most professional jobs from the press, though the speed at which it had to be produced again left some unevenness in the inking.

From Rigby Graham's own press comes *Cog's in transition*¹⁵, selections from a mechanical sketchbook, printed, on a hand platen, a copying press and a mangle, for the P.L.A. Society of Private Printers. A most exciting book, not perfectly printed, but much more fun than many a more immaculate work, with illustrations in many colours printed from a mixture of line-blocks and cogs. Bound in quarter leather with paper boards blocked in coloured foils from vicious looking cogs.

Also printed for the Society of Private Printers is *John Bell's Album de Novo Castro*¹⁶, a description of a commonplace book and a brief life of its first owner by Iain Bain. A fascinating essay, marred a little by uneven presswork, but very well designed, with a particularly fine title-page, and neatly sewn into printed paper wrappers.

Roy Lewis sometimes has trouble with inking too, but redeems all by the charm of his typography. *Oxford/London/America*¹⁷ by Ann Titmus is another pamphlet serving the literary muse of his friends, with a pretty title and a simple setting of the poems, using Bell Italic and Old Face Open initials.

*Wit and Wisdom from Poor Richard's Almanack*¹⁸, and *Poem to Rene*¹⁹, both from Paul Peter Piech, are boldly designed, if somewhat carelessly printed, booklets, the one with entertaining lino cuts illustrating Poor Richard's wit, the other with small, vigorous wood-engravings symbolic of love for Rene.

We have had nothing from Ben Sands for some time, so it is a particular pleasure to find him printing *The Heretic*²⁰ for its author, George Woodman, under the imprint of the Shipyard Press. Well printed and interestingly designed (as always) with a full page linocut frontispiece: excellent value.

And finally, after so many more or less finely printed books, it is refreshing to record the work of Count Potocki of Montalk, who has been using his press in France simply as a means of propagating his *ideas*. Here is no especial regard for fine points of typography, no concern at mixing Monotype and Linotype Garamond in one booklet—yet the effect of vigorous writing printed with a distinct flair is most exhilarating. During 1962 there were issued several booklets sewn uniformly into buff paper wrappers (all listed in *Private Press Books 1962*) which had been printed in the previous two or three years. Among these *Mel Meum*²¹, poems, and *The Fifth Columnist*²², a short story, both by Count Potocki, have perhaps the fullest flavour of the press. D.J.C.

1. Vine Press, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon. £3 3s.
2. Gogmagog Press, 3 Heyworth Road, London, E.15. £2 2s.
3. Signet Press, 23 Union Street, Greenock, Scotland. £1 1s.
4. Ark Press, c/o Scorpion Press, Manor House, Pakefield Street, Lowestoft, Suffolk. £1 1s.
5. Golden Head Press, 26 Abbey Road, Cambridge. 10s. or £3 3s.
6. Ibid. £1.
7. Ibid. 10s. or £3 3s.
8. Dolmen Press, 23 Upper Mount Street, Dublin, Eire. £1 11s. 6d.
9. Pandora Press, 48 Walton Street, Leicester. 7s. 6d.
10. Ibid. 7s. 6d.
11. Ibid. 8s.
12. Ibid. £1 10s.
13. Ibid. £2 2s.
14. Ibid. Unpriced.
15. Cog Press, 396 Aylestone Road, Leicester. Not for sale.
16. Laverock Press, New Cottage, Newnham, Baldock, Herts.
17. Keepsake Press, 6 Ravenscourt Square, London, W.6. Unpriced.
18. Taurus Press, 156 Kingshill Drive, Kenton, Middlesex. 5s.
19. Ibid. 2s. 6d.
20. Shipyard Press, 36 Island Wall, Whitstable, Kent. 5s.
21. Mélissa Press, Lovelace's Copse, Monkwood, Plush, Dorchester, £1 or 10s. or 5s.
22. Ibid. £1 or 10s. or 5s.

The name of John Roberts Press is well known to collectors of fine editions and privately printed books. Their productions range from the twenty-guinea magnificence of a folio 'Song of Songs' to the more modest charm of 'Twelve by Eight', recently published by the Private Libraries Association.

Many bibliophiles cause small books to be privately printed, so to clothe some favoured item in worthy typographical dress. They may cost little more than a good Christmas card – though there is, of course, no limit at the opposite end of the scale.

Those contemplating the production of a book or booklet 'printed for their friends' may expect interested co-operation from John Roberts Press Ltd, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1.