Messenger. No. 11 March 1970

Madison, Wisconsin: Friends of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries, March 1970

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MESSENGER

Published Annually *Madison* *No. 11, March, 1970*

HONG KONG: BOOKMEN'S PARADISE LOST

For many years Hong Kong has earned the enviable nickname of shoppers' paradise, chiefly because there prices are lower and the variety greater than in many other places. It has been said that only in Hong Kong can a music lover get a hi-fi set made of parts from Japan, America, and Germany installed in a replica of an antique Chinese cabinet, or can a pleasure-seeker enjoy a genuine Mandarin dinner while viewing a good New York discotheque. But in the field of book business, if Hong Kong ever was a paradise, the paradise has long been lost, at least ever since mainland China's cultural revolution started early in 1966. Within the past two years, the supply of Chinese books from mainland China has dwindled markedly; and furthermore, many scholarly books, either because of their unorthodox point of view or the possibility of their reflecting China's split personality, have been recalled to mainland China. Consequently, the price of books is no longer low and the variety of them no longer great. For instance, a three-volume work of the legal code of "People's China" (this term not being recognized by the U. S.), formerly priced at $15 or so, now costs $200. To make matters worse, there is no competition among the dealers. The dealer who owned this three-volume work said apologetically that he knew the price asked was ridiculously high, but since there were only two sets of this work in the whole colony and since replacement was not possible, he could not afford to "undersell" it.

Book dealers knew each other's backgrounds well, i.e., they would tell you who had been whose apprentices and who eventually broke away from whom, though their stories were often contradictory; but they did not know each other's

business well, because each of them had his own professional secrets — his own specialization, his own way of importing books from mainland China, pricing, hoarding, and trading with foreign countries, chiefly the U. S. One elderly dealer in a moment of reminiscence described to me how, when Hong Kong was under the occupation of Japan's militarists, expensive books and rare books were all dumped as wastepaper because an intellectual could be regarded as a Chinese patriot and therefore a criminal. He collected some but not too much. Had he known then, he continued with a sigh, that some day Uncle Sam himself was going to attend a Chinese school, he might have easily become a millionaire by now. But the paradise was lost.

Hong Kong's growth and prosperity, though based on borrowed land and borrowed time, is a reverse indicator of China's sorrow. When it was ceded to Britain, the city consisted merely of several fishing islands; but from then on each rebellion, revolution or civil war in China brought huge waves of capital, talents, and labor to this haven; and now Hong Kong is a bustling city of 4,000,000 — Britain's only colony which is yearly sending money to London.

One evening I talked with a few college students, and I noticed that they all had a good command of the English language, a modernistic outlook on life, were efficient in work and engaging in manner, happy and gay, but had very little knowledge of Chinese history. Casually I asked about the cause for the Opium War, and was told that China had been producing opium far superior in quality to that which Britain could send to China from India, and so the war came. This is the Chinese counterpart of an American saying that Lincoln was born in a small cabin which he built with his own hands. I chuckled, and suddenly saw the wisdom in William Yeats' words that the British-Irish relationship is something for every Englishman to learn but for every Irishman to forget. I came out to the streets with a sense of relief, and the evening breeze from the harbor was very refreshing. A taxicab stopped me, and the driver tried to enlighten me by enumerating all the night pleasures of Hong Kong. His catalog was quite long, but unprintable.

Singapore: An Israel in the South Sea

I did not think Singapore worth a bookman's visit, but some friends teaching there insisted that I must see it and assured me that after a brief visit there I would never be the same again. Hesitantly, I went and, to my own surprise, found a British type of democracy, a Fabian political philosophy, a multi-lingual, multi-racial nation, the southernmost frontier of Chinese civilization, a Chinese society, an Israel in the South Sea, and, not least, many hard-to-get books.

When Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew in a televised news conference in August, 1965, announced the independence of the Republic of Singapore from Malaysia, he was in tears and so was the whole Republic. In fact, the separation of Singapore, the free port, from Malaysia, the primary producing hinterland, was forced on the former by the latter for political reasons which, though very complicated, can be described as a kind of gerrymander. Singapore has a population of two million, of which 85% are Chinese; therefore, only when Singa-

pore was ousted from Malaysia could Malayans maintain a majority rule in their own country.

The birth trauma of this new Republic has left ineradicable marks on her psyche. First, the Republic is openly committed to building up a multi-lingual, multi-racial nation where English, Chinese, Malayan, and Tamil are all official languages. Second, she constantly compares herself with Israel in the common task of constructing a democracy in hostile surroundings. As it happened, shortly after Israel won the six-day war with the Arab countries in 1967, Singapore engaged a number of Israeli military men to train Singaporean soldiers because Britain has decided to withdraw in 1970. Thirdly, this tiny Republic has become more than ever devoted to educating the young because, deprived of her natural resources, she has realized that only man-power, brain-power, technological know-how, civic virtue, and good character are indeed the real wealth of a nation. Fourthly and lastly, one could sense that, though no one would speak it aloud, some years later, perhaps in one generation, Singapore would definitely rejoin Malaysia with glory and good conscience.

Singapore has about fifteen bookstores, and among them are the branch bookstores of two publishing giants in mainland China: the Commercial Press and the Chung-hua Co. These two branch bookstores have developed strong local interests, and hence are not under the strict control of their respective home offices. Consequently books brought to Singapore some years ago have not been recalled and therefore are still available. I bought a set of the *Mirror of History* punctuated (interpreted) by Prof. Ku Chieh-kuang, a set of *Index to Chinese Collectanea,* and a set of *Biographies of Chinese Painters,* as well as a number of minor works, all unavailable in Hong Kong or Japan.

In a free port and a free Republic, people are apt to talk freely about everything, understandingly or not. Almost all of them spoke of their Prime Minister with affection and pride, especially so after the Lee-Rusk confrontation came into the open. Lee's government is young, energetic, and clean, and the only complaint against him I heard was from a college friend who said that any professor's academic incompetence could easily be found out by the Prime Minister's office. I happened to be staying in a high-rise guest house (cheaper than a hotel) in the neighborhood of Lee's residence — a modest house with a modest garden even by Singapore standards. The daughter of the guest-house manager, a fifth grader in school, told me that she and her brothers must become good doctors, nurses, engineers, and teachers, because the neighboring Prime Minister had told her that life will be difficult since Singapore is a new nation and there are 7,000 people for each square mile of land. True greatness can be measured by the inspiration given to young minds, and I hoped I was witnessing the writing of a new Asian history.

Next day, just before my departure, I threw a kiss into Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's garden.

Chester Wang
Bibliographer for East Asian Studies

MAZARINADES

In France, ridicule has always been one of the most dangerous weapons that can be employed against the government. Biting and irreverent by nature, the satiric spirit of the French people, sometimes known as *l'esprit gaulois,* has often brought down a minister who seemed firmly entrenched in power. Before the days of the newspaper the most common vehicle for the dissemination of religious or political dissent was the anonymous pamphlet. These fugitive pieces were hawked about Paris and the provincial capitals by a colorful group of men called *colporteurs* who were licensed to sell official publications of eight pages or less. Although the government of the *Ancien Régime* waged a relentless campaign against their clandestine activities, it never succeeded in controlling this independent brotherhood or their "merciless wares."

In the mid-seventeenth century (during a hectic three-year period), over three thousand satirical pamphlets poured from the printing shops on Mount Saint Genevieve in Paris. The occasion for these publications was the general dissatisfaction in France with the ministry of Cardinal Jules Mazarin, a native Italian who had conquered the affections of Queen Anne of Austria, the beautiful widow of Louis XIII. Led by the councillors of the Parliament of Paris, the opponents of the crown sought to curb the relentless trend toward absolutism Mazarin was encouraging in France. The first of these pamphlets appeared anonymously in Paris early in 1648, the last were printed toward the end of 1652. They are characterized by a poor quality of paper and extremely lax standards of typography.

What were the charges leveled against Cardinal Mazarin by his anonymous critics? First and most damaging to his position as prime minister, French patriots denounced him as a foreigner, a Sicilian nobody, a usurper, and a subject of the king of Spain. He was a man of low extraction, they said, the son of a merchant who had once been a valet in Italy. He had never learned to pronounce French properly and was forever saying, "Buon iour, Moussour, comme vous pourtez-vous?" — as unforgivable an offence in seventeenth century France as it is today. Some pamphleteers questioned Mazarin's integrity, others sneered knowingly about his "warm" friendship with the Queen. Still others warned that the Civil War then raging in England had shown the French people how to handle this "Red Tyrant."

At first Mazarin tended to take his critics lightly as long as they paid their taxes. "S'ills font les canzonettas," he remarked in his farcical singing accent, "ils pageront." Later, however, as the gravity of the accusations leveled against him increased, he tried in vain to suppress these pamphlets, popularly known as Mazarinades.

The University of Wisconsin Memorial Library has one of the most extensive collections of Mazarinades in the United States, ranking favorably with the large collections at Harvard, the Folger Library, and the University of Minnesota. Purchased in several small collections over a period of years, the Mazarin-

ades, together with the Library's strong holdings of French political pamphlets preceding the Mazarin era, now form a major research collection. Scholars in many disciplines find these Mazarinades a gold mine of information on seventeenth century Europe. Political theorists use them to trace the impact of English revolutionary thought on French institutions, especially on the emerging absolute monarchy. Literary historians note the occurrence of unusual words and verse patterns that influenced later developments in the French language. Cultural historians look for new ideas in these pamphlets, or the expression of a dying medievalism. Surprisingly, in this age of statistics and quantitative data, the importance of Mazarinades for scholarly work continues to increase beyond all expectations.

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I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO ATTEND AN AUCTION AT SOTHEBY'S

Since I was privileged to attend a book auction at Sotheby's in London, I have found myself the envy of my colleagues, all of whom seem to have treasured this secret ambition. The Sotheby establishment, where works of art and other collectors' items change hands at what are sometimes breathtaking prices, is a rather narrow building fronting on New Bond Street in London's West End. On my first day in London, February 6, my guide led me at a quick dart — nobody seems to stroll in London — on the rather circuitous route from the entrance to the book sale room at the rear. The general effect is matter-of-fact and rather shabby, as becomes an institution that has no need to impress by plush and haughtiness.

The book sale room is a pleasant, high-ceilinged room with an ell containing the auctioneer's stand, a horseshoe table and chairs for additional participants. The books in the current sale are shelved by lot at the rear, open to inspection by prospective bidders. A considerable number of dealers and a sprinkling of collectors and librarians were so engaged when I arrived. The whole effect was rather casual, but I don't doubt that the head porter — a very important figure in the hierarchy, whose good offices are sought and suitably rewarded by prospective bidders — keeps an inconspicuous surveillance over all visitors. (When I inquired about a book missing from a lot, he gave me the accolade of "You're on the ball! That was withdrawn this morning.")

The auction I attended was the sale of the library of the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh. Founded in 1734, the Society (to quote from the auction catalog) "survives as the oldest scientific society in Scotland, the oldest existing undergraduate medical society and the only undergraduate society to hold a Royal Charter." During its long history the Society not only bought contemporary books for members who could not afford to buy them personally but also acquired notable titles by gift from its members and colleagues abroad. How-

ever, displaced from its quarters by redevelopment and lacking funds for upkeep and supervision of a medical history collection, the Society came to the conclusion that the library had outlived its usefulness and should be sold. It was first brought to our attention by the firm of Bertram Rota Ltd. in late 1966 when there was a possibility that it would be sold intact, to maintain its integrity even in a distant setting. However, the Society eventually decided to give wider access to purchasers by offering it at a series of auctions, retaining, however, a number of books of which there are no other copies in Edinburgh.

Because the lead-off time between issuance of an auction catalog and the date of the sale is not much more than three weeks, bidders (especially librarians) are likely to have difficulty in making careful choices and in mobilizing resources in the time allowed. However, because previous access to the library's printed and typed catalogs had permitted careful pricing and decisions on priorities, we anticipated that Wisconsin could enter the bidding with a considerable advantage over bidders less familiar with the titles in the collection, although there was still uncertainty concerning their physical condition.

As it turned out when the first catalog appeared, many of the titles were so haphazardly assigned to lots that our agent despaired of carrying out our commissions without personal consultation. Excluding titles valuable enough for separate entry, a lot might include such a range of subjects as homeopathy, urology, physiology, consumption and anatomy. The listing did not consistently group works of a single author or even — given the librarian's predilection for alphabetical listing — sub-arrange by author. Also, however useful to a dealer buying for stock, the practice of offering two copies of the same title in a lot does no service to the private or institutional collector. My impression was that the catalog could have more adequately displayed the library's strength by more consistent subject grouping.

Once it was decided that I should attend the first auction, there was a scramble for passport pictures, immunization and plane reservations; at the other end my hosts were discovering an acute shortage of hotel rooms in the West End. Fortunately, London's first blizzard of the year, headlined all over England, arrived 24 hours after I did. There was all of two inches of snow, and one could look for blocks along Oxford Street without seeing more than an occasional taxi. However, the next week or so demonstrated why London is so fond of boots.

During the inspection period, I found myself a stool and a corner of a felt-covered table in the auction room. Both I and the felt became progressively more snuffy as I worked my way through as many as possible of the 500-some lots, mostly in moldering calf bindings. Sotheby's is alone in clinging to the single belt of tape around a lot. The use of slip knots and the scrupulous care not to waste tape made it hard to maintain one's respect for fragile volumes while struggling with dusty fingers to tie them up again. By the end of the viewing period the floor was littered with bits of bindings and spines and many more covers had given up their tenuous hold on the spines.

The auctions were scheduled for "eleven o'clock precisely" each day, and ended as precisely at 1:00, in time for a depressed or congratulatory luncheon. We were in place well before the opening, decorously hushed but with speculative glances at other members of the congregation. Bidders were in place around the horseshoe table and in chairs around the walls. I had a first-row seat with Anthony Rota of the Rota firm. Ronald Taylor, the partner who was to do our bidding, was strategically located behind the dealer expected to offer the major competition. (An auction is no place for an amateur and an adroit and experienced agent is necessary to keep up with the speed of an auction and to protect against auction fever.) Although the Rota firm deals in first editions rather than scientific books, Mr. Taylor's grasp of our priorities and ability to calculate the breaking point of his opponents was responsible for much of our success.

At the stroke of 11:00 the auctioneer, Sir John Kerr, entered, accompanied by his clerks. As Sir John, soft-voiced and dignified, announced a lot, a wooden-faced porter at the head of the horseshoe table displayed the book or handed it to anyone at the table desiring a closer look. The auctioneer, who must not only watch all bids from the floor but insert offers received by mail, announced the opening bid and each step thereafter. Each bidder indicated his acceptance of the bid in his own way, usually by a head or hand gesture. Voice bids were rare, and if anyone used anything so subtle as an eyebrow signal, I did not see it. The steps were usually in two to five pound increments. In only one case did a bidder leap from a bid of about £60 to £135, as if to indicate impatience with the more plodding process and a willingness to spend his customer's money to the limit authorized.

Whatever the atmosphere when a Rembrandt or a Picasso is on the block, a book auction is rather restrained. The same sense of high drama that one imagines surrounding disposal of a work of art fetching £100,000 cannot be expected to prevail when the top is £2,000. There are moments of tension when a duel is taking place, but these bidders are mostly professionals with a definite job to do: either buying for stock or executing commissions; they have been there before and they will be there again. This is not to say that tension is absent. Lots are sold at the rate of two a minute, and such is the concentration required that both bidders and auctioneers find a two-hour session about their limit. Each bidder is operating under the pressure of time and of responsibility to his principal: judging how far to stretch the limits laid down by his commission, gauging the determination of his opponents, calculating previous savings against the distance yet to go.

As each lot was sold, the auctioneer announced the final price and the successful bidder. "Sold to Rota" occurred with gratifying frequency. When the successful bidder was unfamiliar to the auctioneer, a clerk quietly went to him to record name and address.

As was expected, our chief competition came from the major British dealer in medico-historical books, Dawsons of Pall Mall, represented by Mr. Marley,

craggy and gravel-voiced, and W. F. Hammond, the vice-president. When books out of scope for us or already in our collection were on the block, we could relax while other bidders had their innings: Francis Edwards, Hugh Elliott, G. Walford, and Gurney of London; Israel of Amsterdam, and some individual buyers. Other dealers from the continent were present but, I believe, none from America. Also represented were Maggs, Quaritch, and Blackwell, who bid sparingly on significant titles. A dark, intense young man was pointed out as Dr. Richard A. Hunter who, with his mother, Dr. Ida Macalpine, has written widely on the history of psychiatry. A major-general acquired a book on gunshot wounds. A chemistry professor named Sondheimer acquired many of the Boyle items and others on chemistry, but not without stiff opposition. A half dozen physicians were among the successful bidders.

I know that several institutions in the United States entered bids at this sale, but mostly through agents. There was a little stir when the University of Texas was announced as successful bidder on several titles, Duke University and the University of Alberta, one each.

And now for the question, "How did we do?" In general, very well. We acquired almost exactly a third of the total lots, including, however, 55 percent of the medical volumes. Counting the titles already in our collection, 70 percent of the medical titles in this portion of the Edinburgh library will be available on campus. If we do as well on subsequent sales, we can claim to give some continuity to this venerable library. Disposition of the unique run of Edinburgh dissertations is still a question mark, this collection having been removed from the sale when Sotheby's discovered a couple of "tea chests full" of additional volumes in the basement.

Unhappily, some of the great rarities went beyond our range: Bright's *Reports of medical cases* (1827-31) and Baer's *De ovi* (1827) at $3840 each and Carpue's *An account of two successful operations for restoring a lost nose* (1816) at $3360. Auenbrugger's *Inventum novum ex percussione thoracis* (not a prepossessing volume physically) fetched $1800. A price of $2880 paid for a presentation copy of a reprint of Bernard's article, *De l'origine du sucre,* indicates the length to which collectors will go for completeness. We were also out of the running for a number of works by Thomas Beddoes, one of which went for $1560. The sixteen Boyle items, none of first importance, averaged about $250 each. Ampere's *Theories des phénomènes electro-dynamiques* fetched $1080 and a Caesalpinus *De plantis of* 1583, $2800.

Some of the more valuable volumes we acquired were John Hunter's *Natural history of the human teeth* (1771) with the rare supplement; Fabricius' *Opera anatomica* (1625) and Fallopius' *Opera* (1584). It was gratifying to sit out the competition for titles we already own, such as the first edition of Beaumont's *Experiments* . . . and several valued works of Charles Bell.

Our effort was, first, to acquire titles not available in the library in any form or edition; second, to strengthen subject fields in which we are already strong, such as anatomy and neurology; and, third, to fill in titles lacking in the works

of authors already well represented in the library, such as Charles Bell, John Hunter and Boerhaave. The 1,000 volumes acquired add many works by distinguished Scottish and English physicians of the 18th and 19th centuries: Baillie, Cullen, Bateman, Brodie, Fothergill, Allan Burns, Armstrong, Abercrombie and many others. Our strong collections in late 18th and early 19th century French authors were also considerably augmented. Although works of the later period were more numerous, a number of important 16th and 17th century works were also acquired. An unexpected acquisition, unlisted in a lot of 67 French works, was the first edition of Brunet's *Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres.*

To a considerable extent the condition of the volumes worked to our benefit. Although most of the texts were in reasonable condition (except for some ancient thumbprints and inkspots) the bindings were not. Instead of the signs of mildew I expected from the Edinburgh climate, dryness was more in evidence and too many of the covers were detached to make these attractive buys for collectors and dealers. A selection of volumes was left to be repaired or rebound in London, where hand-sewing is still available.

In these days of straitened budgets, it might be well to explain that the expenses of this purchase will be charged to the bequest the Medical Library received from the Miller estate.

Immediately after the sale, we were given the courtesy of the use of the "Sotheby cart" for delivery of the books to Rota, only a few blocks away. While I sorted and examined our purchases, I had the rare experience of seeing something of the workings of a first-edition firm. Bertram Rota Ltd. occupied the first floor of a modern yellow-brick building on Savile Row, sharing some of the glamor of this prestigious location with the Beatles next door at No. 1. (A few vacant-faced juveniles were usually on self-imposed duty on the sidewalk.) The pleasant, high-ceilinged showroom held an appealing variety of contemporary works and some attractive exhibits, both of which threatened my concentration on my dusty duties. The spider-web of rooms behind gave easy access from showroom to offices, mail room and private cubicles for staff members engaged in various tasks. To a bookman there was something very familiar in the flow of comment and movement: triumph over a catalog finally delivered from the printers, exasperation over a "layaway" temporarily mislaid, departures to inspect a library or attend an auction. I admired without being able to imitate the practiced ease with which innumerable cups of tea — and some of coffee — went their destined way without telltale drips or splatters. The youth and enthusiasm of the staff were impressive, from the partners down to the youngest junior in narrow Edwardian tailoring or the blonde mail clerk disappearing around the corner with the flirt of a plaid mini. (I admired the restraint of a city where the length of the skirt bears some relationship to the age of the wearer.)

It was obvious that a firm dealing with manuscripts and first editions calls on many professional skills to keep up with literary trends and discoveries, to select stock, to appraise offerings and to present its wares attractively in sale-

room and printed catalog. Probably no other profession requires such a unique combination of literary taste, astuteness and probity.

I noted particularly the respect given to the cataloger, who has some of the duties of a library cataloger but a more creative responsibility: the manuscript cataloger who must extract the sense of a letter and describe it in a phrase or quotation that will attract a buyer; the book cataloger who must not only describe a volume honestly but often provide annotations in which "a great deal of learning is unobtrustively inlaid."

To the exhilaration of simply being in London were added memories of much good book talk, alternating serious discussion of unrecognized literary talent with gleeful anecdotes of eccentricity; intense concentration and lighthearted relaxation; wet feet and warm hospitality. I brought back more from London than books.

Helen Crawford, Librarian
William S. Middleton Medical Library

DR. MESMER AND HIS MAGIC FLUID

The Memorial Library recently purchased from Viardot in Paris a small collection of 18th-century pamphlets on the interesting phenomenon of "mesmerism," or "animal magnetism," that "science" bordering on the occult which caused so much almost fanatic enthusiasm among the populace and so much disapprobation among members of the Academy of Sciences and the medical faculty in Paris shortly before the Revolution. While the collection is small — only 24 pamphlets out of the hundreds which argued in print the genius or charlatanism of the Austrian physician Franz Anton Mesmer — it adds to other such material in the Library and as a whole presents vivid evidence of one aspect of the widespread flight from reason that ended the French Enlightenment in the chaos of the Revolution.

Mesmer arrived in Paris in 1778, preceded by a considerable reputation for what were eagerly believed by many to be miraculous cures, but which were explained by him in terms of the doctrine of animal magnetism. He believed in a universal fluid, an all-pervading force comparable to electricity or gravity which could be transmitted through a human agency (himself) to both animate and inanimate objects. In those human beings who were susceptible, this animal magnetism could produce profound, most often curative, effects upon the nervous system. Mesmer had remarkable success in a number of cases, and it was not long before his *mansion* on the Place Vendôme became too small to accommodate the increasing number of patients. Since many were of the court and wealthy, Mesmer had a rich income, enough to enable him to establish a clinic in a village near Paris where his patients could stay when extended treatment was necessary. A typical group session is described in the recent biography of Mesmer by D. M. Walmsley:

"Mesmer made use of a peculiar piece of apparatus known as the baquet for the purpose of magnetizing several patients at the same time. This was in the form of an oak barrel pierced with a number of holes through which protruded movable rods of iron. Inside the barrel phials of magnetized water were placed in sockets arranged in concentric circles; all these were immersed in water containing magnetized iron filings, glass filaments or similar materials. Variations of this type dispensed with the main body of water, using instead only sand or crushed iron ore; and in place of iron rods there would be cords. Patients sat around holding hands, with knees and feet touching to ensure the circulation of the magnetic fluid. Each of them applied the rod or cord to the affected part of their anatomy. In a corner of the salon a pianist would play appropriate music, or sometimes Mesmer himself performed on his glass harmonica; soothing passages in a minor key for the most part, more animated when he wished to bring on a crisis. Curtains were drawn to permit only a dim light in the room and the atmosphere was regulated with the aid of a thermometer, a barometer and a hygrometer. Mesmer went around among the patients, fixing on each his penetrating eyes, speaking in a low voice or passing his hand or wand over the body; calming those who were agitated and stimulating the listless. Patients who needed special attention had fuller treatment. In keeping with the decorum of the proceedings he wore a robe of lilac silk trimmed with lace. This was not so eccentric or ostentatious in an age when men's dress was far more elaborate and colourful than it is today."

Despite growing alarm and resistance in established medical and scientific circles, Mesmer soon became the rage of Paris. He himself was convinced of the scientific truth of his theories and made repeated attempts to prove them to his skeptical peers. His *Mémoire sur la découverte du magnétisme animal* (Paris, 1779) defended his theory, while at the same time keeping the essentials of its practice secret. Together with disciples Bergasse and Kornmann, he established "Societies of Harmony" to initiate those 100 subscribers who could afford the high fee into the secrets of animal magnetism. Lafayette was one of these.

Madame Du Barry in her memoirs gives a vivid contemporary account of the conflicting opinions about Mesmer:

"His lectures are attended by crowded audiences and while some went away with the impression of his being something superior to this world, many departed with the conviction that if he were endowed with supernatural powers, he derived them from Lucifer himself. You must well remember the universal excitement he aroused and to what a pitch of enthusiasm his votaries carried their admiration, and if I mistake not, you were one of the interested; pray allow me to inquire, what the secret cost you, for well I know, the doctor revealed not the grand arcana for nothing. The lively imagination of Mme. de Forcalquier eagerly caught at the wild tenets preached by Mesmer and she exerted herself so successfully on my mind that she induced me to become one of his disciples, and I went to the trouble

of having a magnetic apparatus set up at Luciennes, which quickly brought a train of Mesmerians around me. I shall tell you, the initiatory fee demanded by the doctor for the explanation of the workings of the machine was a hundred louis, and it did somewhat stagger my faith to find one who professed to have no other intention than to serve humanity, demand so large a premium from his followers; however, enthusiasm easily reconciles the most seeming contradictions, and the passion for magnetism swept away all attempts to measure its proceedings by the dictates of reason."

This "passion for magnetism" culminated in the appointment by the king of two commissions to investigate Mesmer's claims. The first of these consisted of four members of the Faculty of Medicine and five members of the Academy of Sciences, including the American Benjamin Franklin, then resident in France; Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier, whose later work in chemistry, before his execution in the Revolution, earned him an important place in the history of modern science; and Jean-Sylvain Bailly, one of the most prominent scientists of his day, later also to die on the guillotine. The second commission was made up of four members of the Royal Medical Society.

Both commissions, after lengthy investigations, decided against the validity of animal magnetism as a cure. The commissions published their reports (a dissenting opinion by the important botanist Antoine-Laurent de Jussieu was also published), which were met by an almost immediate flood of pamphlet literature defending Mesmer and damning the commissions and vice versa.

Mesmer felt no immediate effects of the commissions' actions, but several of his disciples, including his most faithful, d'Eslon, lost their positions in the learned societies for refusing to disavow Mesmer and his practices. Not long after, the fad for mesmerism began to abate as this turbulent society, rushing nearer each day to the Reign of Terror, sought new amusements in the spectacular balloon flights recently begun, and the occultism of "Count" Cagliostro.

Mesmer left Paris, and after several years of continual pursuit and practice of the principles of animal magnetism, died in Switzerland in 1815. The Societies of Harmony which he founded carried on his work well into the 19th century. One of the most famous of his followers, the Marquis de Puysegur, was to develop the techniques of hypnotism.

The vast pamphlet literature generated over the Mesmer controversy is of considerable interest from a number of points of view: it depicts vividly a brilliant age and people at an approach to crisis; the drama of an established scientific elite dividing and entrenching under pressure of new, often outrageous ideas, is all the more fascinating for its repetitions in our own day; whatever the merits of Mesmer's theories, or the explanation for his cures, "mesmerism" has had a significant impact on psychology; for the historians of science, animal magnetism retains importance as one of the first instances of widespread popular interest in science; the historian of the French Revolution will find many of the key figures in that event intimately connected with the

mesmerist movement, and indeed a recent book has investigated mesmerism as a contributing factor in the radicalization of the French mind.

The Library's recently acquired collection contains several important items, notably three works by d'Eslon (Mesmer's first important advocate), a work by Mesmer, the report of the Royal Medical Society, and an important collection by Thouret. These add to other key works purchased some time ago: the Franklin committee report, both in French and English editions, the dissenting report of de Jussieu, and the work of Bergasse. There is also material in the Medical Library pertinent to mesmerism. While it is not possible for us to acquire a complete collection of the pamphlet material, nor perhaps really desirable, hopefully the Library will be able to continue to add research materials to this fascinating collection.

John Neu
Bibliographer for the
History of Science

PLAYING THE BOOKMARKET

One can distinguish three kinds of book collectors. First, the simple-minded ones, who buy books for reading and end up with a library. Second, the hunters, who acquire for the sake of acquiring, for the sport and excitement of it, for the satisfaction of finding and the pride of having. (Of them, A. N. L. Munby wrote, tongue only half in cheek, "Book collecting is a full-time occupation, and one wouldn't get far if one took time off for frivolities like reading.") The money value of their collections is for those two species of bibliophile just a by-product and after-thought, surely not a primary motive. And then there is the third category of "collector": he who views books as objects of financial speculation. To these playing-the-book-market types, syndicated financial columnist Sylvia Porter devoted two recent columns.

There are, she says, lucrative investments outside of stocks and bonds, and rare books are prominent among them. Not being a book expert herself, Miss Porter consulted the firm of H. P. Kraus of New York for guidelines — guidelines being for modern man what the Categorical Imperative was for some of our forefathers. Mr. H. P. Kraus had the good sense to tell his questioner at the outset that the book business was "strictly for the connoisseur; an amateur would be a complete fool to try to make a killing in this game." But a moment later he appears to have abandoned that insight — partly, no doubt, because it would have caused Miss Porter's projected column to come to naught, partly because he may have sensed the potentials for private amusement in the interview. He called "the real diamonds" of the book biz to the lady's attention — like, say, Gutenberg Bibles, and items such as "first editions of Shakespeare, Dante, Chaucer, the illuminated manuscripts of the 9th to 16th centuries" — things like that. However, Miss Porter understood, and passed the info on to her readers, Mr. Kraus didn't *really* suggest any extensive investments along

those lines, as this would run into hot competition from university libraries. In fact, the column hints, its readers might best *not* set out on purchasing Gutenberg Bibles, but rather concentrate on diamonds of minor magnitude and second-best bets. It wouldn't be nice to a philatelist either, Miss Porter may have felt, to advise him to stock up on 1865 one-cent stamps of British Guiana (of which one known copy exists), or to get himself a supply of the Mauritius Post Office issue. After all, there are numerous sound, moneymaking bonanzas outside of First Folios. For example:

> "Today, aware of the huge profits being made in this far-out field of investment, are you wondering how you might invest a portion of your own funds and share in the rare book bonanza? You would be only human if you were, so in this column I'll give you guidelines on how you, an amateur, can participate — even in face of the fact that you will be up against a small army of professional rare book dealers, specialists, highly trained university library curators."

Well, where there are guidelines, there's hope. Listen to this:

> "Ten years ago, a copy of the journal in which Einstein's *Theory of Relativity* appeared (published in Leipzig in 1916) was worth $40-$50; today it's worth $500-$600. Fifteen years ago, a copy of Newton's *Principia Mathematica* sold for $500-$800; today, it sells for $6,000-$10,000. Also in the past 14 years, Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* (1543) has soared from $1,500 to $25,000."

And that in the history of science alone. The last-named title, incidentally, might give rise within the citizenry, and perhaps even in the State Capitol, to the suspicion that Copernicus was one of them bearded revolutionaries out to destroy law and order, but we shall dismiss this thought as too bizarre. And at any rate, as Miss Porter wants to make crystal clear, he is now serving the interests of capitalism and private enterprise, whatever revolutions he may have had in mind.

Further guidelines draw further connections between money and literature. Take the field of "First Editions of Modern Young Authors and Playwrights Who Show Great Literary Promise," and note Miss Porter's fine distinction between a playwright and an author. James Joyce's *Ulysses,* she says, to cite an example, "illustrated by Matisse, has soared in value from $165 to $600 since the early 1960's." Well, that's no hay, and it must therefore come as a shock to Sylvia Porter's readers to hear her add, incongruously and lamely, "A first now sells for $65." That kind of remark is liable to put a thick wet blanket over the initiative of prospective investors in promising young authors and playwrights, and may even remind them of other bad experiences with hot tips. Unless, of course, they really scrutinize their mentor's words and logically conclude from them that the original edition of *Ulysses* was *not* illustrated by Matisse, and that the true value of the promising young author's work must therefore lie in the illustrations by an even more promising young painter, and not in the text. But I have good news for Miss Porter and her flock: a first

(Paris, 1922) edition of James Joyce's novel sold for $425 in 1965, and the preceding year for $850, though that was paid for an inscribed "out-of-series" copy with, alas, "its outer hinges partially split"; however, another inscribed and undefective copy sold, again in 1965, for $1,150, even though it was merely a second issue of the first edition. Those are some of the finer points Mr. Kraus had alluded to as constituting possible pitfalls for the untutored investment buyer; and to add to his mounting confusion, I can reveal that the first English (also 1922, but London instead of Paris) edition brought a mere $70 in 1964, while the first American edition (New York, 1934) was auctioned off for $10 that same year. This must be the edition which Miss Porter claims "now sells for $65." She is conceivably not quite aware, however, that Mr. Kraus, her informant, is himself something of an investor in book-biz-bonanzas and not adverse to profit-taking. What all this goes to show is that there are firsts and firsts in the book racket, and that people straying from the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* into the financial pages of modern literature might find themselves in insufficiently charted waters.

Finally, in her second column, our financial advisor recommends for a tidy nest egg the buying into "children's books with a certain eternity." By a certain eternity she means, I am sure, "a kind of eternity," an uncertain eternity, in other words, which, as far as immortality goes, is the only eternity there is. If you have, for example a first edition of *Alice in Wonderland,* you have, beams Miss Porter, the equivalent of $10,000-$20,000 in cold cash; and there are several of Alice's sayings that would make appropriate comment on that. Nevertheless, there is a caution: "Perfect copies of *any* children's book are rare" (by which Miss Porter means "scarce"), and parents will be well advised "to hold the 'growth' volumes you buy" and keep them in perfect condition (hard as such condition is to come by, as we just learned). That way "your chances of seeing your investment grow substantially are excellent."

My worst fears, after reading the columns, haven't materialized so far, probably because so few of the readers could come up with anything that looked reasonably like a 10th-Century illuminated manuscript or a first edition of Chaucer, no matter how they scoured their attics. Only one nice lady appeared, a bit sheepishly, with a box of children's books and, referring to Miss Porter, announced that she indeed *had* a copy of *Alice in Wonderland;* she did allow, though, that it was not in perfect condition, inasmuch as it lacked the title page and was a bit marked up, what with having been read by all her children at one time or another. Still, it just *might* be a first edition. "With the title page gone, nobody can tell," she said, sadly but expectantly. Yet, as it turned out, somebody could tell anyway, alas, alas. But we both agreed, it was a good try. (The rest of the box's contents she herself didn't consider very unusual — it was to be more a backdrop for the copy of *Alice.*)

And so I keep my fingers crossed. And hope Miss Porter will soon advise her clients — if they *partout* want to branch out from their good solid IBM, AT&T and Xerox bluechips — to dabble in British crown jewels, or Stradivari

violins, or at the very least in original canvasses by the aspiring young artists Botticelli and Van Gogh — all of which are sound, surefire investments with excellent growth potentials, and quite likely even more profitable bonanzas in the long run than Bay Psalm Books and Gutenberg Bibles.

Felix Pollak
Curator of Rare Books

Reprinted from Library Journal.

GIFTS OF 1969

It was a good year for gifts.

Mortimer Levitan, who had earlier deposited his collection of cook books (now in the Steenbock Library), stipulated a trust fund in his will for the future purchase of similar books.

Mr. Don Anderson, former publisher of the Wisconsin State Journal, once again gave us a number of books from his collection of Limited Editions. These beautiful books are now quite expensive.

Emeritus Professor Robert Pooley of the English Department gave us manuscripts and letters relating to the author Jesse Stuart, with whom he had carried on a correspondence for a number of years. In addition, Professor Pooley made us a gift of a number of volumes of general literature.

Once again Mr. Lloyd E. Smith of Racine gave us the opportunity to select from a large number of useful books on many subjects, from which we selected about 500. Especially welcome were the volumes of fiction which will help us in our effort to build an outstanding collection.

We are also indebted to Dr. Marvin Sukov of Minneapolis who continues to add to our outstanding collection of "little magazines."

A gift made in 1968, but not processed at that time, was willed us by Carrie Rasmussen. This considerable collection consists of children's literature and works on the teaching of speech and drama to children.

The Positivist Church and Apostolate of Brazil sent us 400 volumes which constitute an almost complete set of its official publications.

Two other donors added to our collection of "little magazines," these being James L. Weil of New Rochelle, New York and Robert H. Woodward of San Jose State College.

Emeritus Professor Harry Glicksman added to our collections in literature, economics and history. From the estate of the late Professor Jack Gilchrist we also received volumes of general literature. An interesting group of books, mostly on scientific management, was given us by Professor Harold Kubly of the School of Business.

In honor of Professor A. C. Jordan (deceased) of African Languages, the Society of St. John the Evangelist of Oxford, England sent us a Kaffir dictionary.

Other donors (from Madison) were: the Gisholt John A. Johnson Foundation, Reverend Bishop G. Frederich Wolff, Miss Ann Stark, the late Edora Pinkerton Vaughan, and Michael Booth, one of our students.

Other donors were Mrs. Thomas R. Gardner of Williams, Arizona (in memory of her sister Bea Estes Holmburg), Kenneth F. Whitson of Mount Horeb, the Lake Geneva Public Library, Robert L. Popper of White Plains, New York, and Philip B. Secor of Muttlerberg College in Pennsylvania.

Louis Kaplan
Director of Libraries

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