

# Review Articles

*Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books Printed in other Countries, 1641-1700.* Compiled by Donald Wing of the Yale University Library. In Three Volumes. Volume III, Pl-Z28. Printed by Columbia University Press, New York, 1951, for The Index Society. \$15 for members of the Index Society, \$20 for non-members.

An American librarian who was in England in 1950-51 on a Guggenheim Fellowship to write the history of the contribution of British booksellers to the building of American libraries carried with him from bookseller to bookseller all over the island a large Gladstone bag packed with two bound volumes of Wing and one unbound in proof sheets. Entering a shop, he would call for all its 17th century material, and would then slowly and methodically check each against his *vade mecum*, ordering without further ado whatever he lacked. Such assiduous reliance opened the eyes of British book dealers to the possibility of Wing. They had known of the compilation before, in a kind of way; several of them owned the first two volumes, and there were others who had tried in vain to get copies. But not until the succession of packages began its 6000-mile westward trek did they realize that here was a MUST without which they could no longer do effective business. One enterprising dealer borrowed the third volume so that he might check overnight the offerings in his next catalog against it, while others vowed that never thereafter could they afford to list a 17th century item without the words, "W491. In three U.S. Libraries only." This story might well stand as the first chapter in some future work to be entitled, "The Contribution of American Librarians to English Booksellers."

Of the 22,000 items listed in this volume of Wing, there are at a rough guess, made from counting on a dozen pages only, about 10,000 items which are recorded in three libraries only. That entry in a dealer's catalog is going to keep the prices boosted for a long time to come. It has already doubled if not tripled them. Mr. Wing must have been the first to have been surprised that his locations should have become a booksellers' Bible. He meant

them to be used by scholars, locating copies in this country in the East, Middle West, West and South. Some of the large university libraries, such as the University of California, of Minnesota and of Michigan, he did not ask to check against his list. There was no reason why he should. He simply was not intending to be exhaustive. Where Sabin gives four locations for Samuel Wakeman's *Sound Repentance*, Wing gives but one. And yet any day we may expect to see this pamphlet in a catalog with the note "Yale has the only recorded copy in America."

Yale, indeed, the symbol for which is a solitary "Y", seems to do rather better than that place at the other end of the New Haven line, the symbol for which is "MH." And why shouldn't it? Had this catalog been the work of several scholars from as many universities, doubtless such little forgivable vagaries as the including of location symbols for seven private libraries, four of them at Yale, would have been erased. A pity had that happened. Difficult as it is to impress a personality upon a catalog, Don Wing, by tricks like these, has succeeded in doing it. It was in no spirit of long-faced dourness that he began and single-handed carried through the enormous task of digging up titles, putting them on slips, keeping the slips in order, running down authors' names. In England he traveled from library to library—he lists 40 for London alone—emitting a grunt of joy with the discovery of every unknown title, and as the grunts became fewer, they became louder. It is not often that a dealer can note "Not in Wing." The completion of this work is a personal triumph, and Wing deserves the immortality conferred upon those whose names become nouns and verbs. "To wing it" now means to check against Wing.

That many of the books and pamphlets listed were unimportant then and are now goes without saying. When there are only 22 entries for as able a man as Rushworth, 21 for the first Lord Shaftesbury, 28 for Sir William Temple, one can pardonably wonder at the worth of the 130 entries for Bishop Simon Patrick, who wrote in polemical theology, scriptural exegesis, and edificatory literature. As a rule, churchmen were the most prolific of 17th century writers. William

Sherlock, Dean of St. Paul's, scores 121 entries; Bishop Jeremy Taylor, 138; and Bishop Edward Stillingfleet, 123. Yet the palm for the greatest number of entries goes to that unappeasable pamphleteer, William Prynne, with 344. William Penn, no unprolific writer himself, comes up with 153.

Being an age of civil war and its aftermath, thousands of pamphlets appeared anonymously. The anonymous pamphleteer, however, displayed a singular lack of originality in his titles. There are 107 entries beginning with "Short," "A Short Way," "A Short Relation," "A Short Cut"; there were 53 "Seasonables," 131 "Reasons," 111 "Stranges," and no less than 806 beginning with the word "True." These were the key words.

Seldom does any book deserve the too much abused description of "indispensable." Wing does deserve it. All scholars of 17th century England, and all the librarians who serve them, have already recognized what it means to have easily and accurately available a list of all books and pamphlets printed in the period, and their dependence on Wing will grow in the years to come. If the Index Society never sponsors another "index," it will have justified its formation by the publication of Wing.—*Stanley Pargellis, The Newberry Library.*

## Studies in Bibliography

*Studies in Bibliography. Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia.* Edited by Fredson Bowers. Vol. 4, 1951/52, Charlottesville. (\$6.00, free to members.)

A wondrous sight, familiar to many librarians, is that of mortification being publicly performed en masse by the initiates of a bibliographical society. I refer to the custom of their meetings at which on fidget-hard chairs or soporific seats the membership is expected to assimilate audially papers which are visual in their appeal. The Bibliographical Society (London) and its American counterpart are confirmed practitioners of this traditional rite, and I am rather certain that if one were to suggest to their officers that meetings should be devoted entirely to visual representation of bibliographical topics—exhibits, slides, etc.—the heretic would be quickly water-marked and sent down river.

Five years ago a hopeful augury was the founding of a new bibliographical society at the University of Virginia, and although one of its founding high priests, Professor Fredson Bowers, personifies the apotheosis of Scientific Bibliography, humanistic amelioration was furnished by his co-founding fellow Virginians, John Cook Wyllie, Jack Dalton and Linton Massey.

The papers gathered into print in Volume 4 are a nice blend of historical and statistical bibliography and of British, Continental and American topics. Shakespeare is the subject of four contributions; the moderns include Sherwood Anderson and T. S. Eliot. Useful feature is a "Selective Checklist of Bibliographical Scholarship" compiled by Hirsch and Heaney. Issuance of a bound annual volume has advantages over quarterly papers, such as those published by the Bibliographical Society of America, which are awkward to use in parts and increasingly costly to bind.

Publication of these studies is but one of the activities of this lively Virginia group. They also sponsor a student book collectors' contest, and a contest for the best printing in Virginia. The Society richly deserves the world-wide interest it has elicited.—*Lawrence Clark Powell, University of California Library, Los Angeles.*

## Library Trends

*Library Trends*, Volume I, Number 1, July 1952. University of Illinois Library School, Urbana, Illinois. Quarterly. \$5.00 per year.

*Library Trends* is the new quarterly of the University of Illinois Library School. It is the outcome of a four-year study of the available library literature by the school's faculty and marks its decision that there was a place for a new professional journal—a journal which would "present in each issue a synthesis and evaluation of a single topic relating to librarianship . . . review and evaluate current practice and current thinking in librarianship . . . [and] be even more concerned with the probable future of such current developments in librarianship."

"Current Trends in College and University Libraries" is the subject of the first number (July, 1952). In a brief introduction, the editor of this issue, Robert B. Downs, sum-