

Rare Books

The "Spread" in Auction Prices John Pierce, Rare Book Expert Details of Important Coming Sales

Alfred Becks, well known as an expert on the drama, is now engaged in arranging and cataloguing the large collection of this sort of material gathered by the late Evert Jansen Wendell, which was devised to Harvard University. Mr. Becks is working under the supervision of John Anderson.

W. H. Speck some time ago gave to the library of Yale University his extraordinary collection of Goethe and has been placed in charge of the section of the library in which his collection is housed.

Peculiar things happen in the auctions. At Anderson's recently the second edition of Thomas Shepard's *Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking forth upon the Indians in New-England* sold for \$175. At the American Art Association the first edition of the same work, London, 1647, sold for \$67.50.

Walter R. Benjamin, the autograph man, says some pretty sharp things now and again in that spicy paper of his, the *Collector*. He rises up now to suggest that authors who autograph their books for people should write an inscription after this wise: "This book is presented to James C. Young on the understanding that it is not to be offered for sale during his lifetime. Then if it appears at auction we shall know what to think of the seller." Mr. Young is a gentleman who sold a large collection of inscribed books in the past year.

Fun is being poked at the Pittsburg Carnegie Library because it has recently issued a bibliography of *Sand: Its Occurrences, Properties and Uses*.

John Pierce.

The late John Pierce was known personally to thousands throughout the country as a man of the highest integrity, having a knowledge of the rare book business far superior to that of most of those engaged in the trade. For about ten years from 1882 he was in business in this city with E. W. Nash at 80 Nassau street. After a short term with George D. Smith he went to Albany, in the employ of John Skinner, with whom he remained until 1905, when he became a partner of John E. Scopes. Later this firm dissolved, Mr. Pierce joining Frank Scopes, with whom he was associated until his death.

Wilberforce Eames says that Mr. Pierce was the first collector of Hawthorne in the country, and it was his boast that he had purchased from one of the wisest of New York dealers a copy of *Fanshawe* for \$3.50, afterward selling it to Mr. Foote for a prodigious price. He was very expert in

early manuscripts, revolutionary history and English literature, and was consulted by experts from all over the world.

Auctions of the Week.

At Anderson's, May 8, 9 and 10, was sold the McBurney library, 917 lots.

Coming Sales.

At Anderson's, May 13-16, the library of the late Winston H. Hagen, 1,466 lots.

Excessive rarities are as common in this collection as junk is in the average collection that turns up in the auction room. Mention may be made of only a few items, such as stand out most prominently: Robert Browning's *Pavane*, the rarest of all Browning items; the Kilmarnock Burns; Brayton's *Poems Lyrick and Pastorall*; Gray's *Elegy*, 1751; George Herbert's *The Temple*, 1633; Keats's *Poems*, presentation copy, 1817; Milton's *Lycidas*, 1638, with 106 other Milton items; Pope's *Dunciad*, 1728; Shakespeare's *Poems*, the first edition, 1640; Skelton's works, about 1529; Tottell's *Songes and Sonets*, 1574; Walton's *Lives*, 1670, presentation copy.

At Scott & O'Shaughnessy's, May 14-16, mornings, Americana, English books, first editions, maps, &c., 796 items.

Among the items of special interest are a broadside giving the names of those who addressed Gov. Hutchinson of Massachusetts against the Solemn League and Covenant, 1774; another announcing Burgoyne's surrender; Col. David Humphrey's *Poem addressed to the Armies of the United States*, New Haven, 1780; twenty-eight letters to Col. William Barton while he was in the debtors' prison at Danville, Vt.; an unknown California pamphlet by F. Coombs, a San Francisco daguerreotypist, relating his life in that city in the early days, copiously illustrated with scenes of fires, hangings, &c., from daguerreotypes made by the author at the time of their occurrence; *Journal of the First Senate of the United States*, first session, 1789; an apparently unknown New York edition of *Robinson Crusoe*, printed by Hurtin & Commandinger, 1795; fourteen items on the early West, many of them rare; twenty-three very unusual Florida items; nineteen items relating to and by Alexander Hamilton; twenty-seven Indian items, some very rare; the first work on life insurance published in America, 1772; a signature of Thomas Lynch, a signer of the Declaration of Independence; Mackworth's *Proposal in Miniature*, as it has been put in practice in New York, London, 1720; Thomas Prince's *Vade Mecum for America, or Companion for Traders and Travellers*, Boston, 1731; twenty-two very scarce items on canals in the Eastern section of the country, 1811-1831; forty uncommon items on Hawaii; seventy-eight early almanacs, between 1746 and 1827; Ames, Bickerstaff, Low, Thomas, Poulson, Shoemaker, Bioren & Madden, West, Wheeler, Weatherwise, Beers, Houghton, Bailey, Ward, Marot & Walter, Sharp and Fessenden are among the philomaths.

At Scott & O'Shaughnessy's Friday, May 17, morning and afternoon, another property, scarce books on American history, first editions, &c. Fifty-four Indian items, among them some very rare captivities; *Report on the Practicability of the Long Island Railroad, with the Act of Incorporation*, 1834; a book with autograph from the library of Increase Mather; twenty-four items by Thomas Paine, of various dates; sixty-one items on Western history, many very rare, and others of interest and importance.

At Sotheby's, London, May 28-30, the magnificent collection of engravings and woodcuts by old masters belonging to the estate of the late Lord Northwick, comprising examples of all the early masters of note.

At Sotheby's, London, June 3-5, a collection of books, manuscripts and autographs. Includes a large lot of Byron manuscript poems, incunabula, Persian and Arabian manuscripts, Swinburne manuscripts, and letters of many celebrities.

Perhaps you didn't know that the tank has had many different names. In the early experimental stage of the development of this war machine it was commonly known as a "land cruiser" or "land ship." "Reservoir" and "cistern" were tried but were found to be too long winded and clumsy. This and other interesting matters are touched up in *The Tanks*, by Col. E. D. Swinton of the Royal Engineers, British Army, just published by the George H. Doran Company.

H. L. Mencken, Critic



H. L. MENCKEN
Author of "DAMN! A BOOK OF CALUMNY."

By HOWARD WILLARD COOK.

WILLIAM WINTER has gone down in stage annals as one of the great critics of the drama and its allied arts. This was a dignified vocation. His was the sort of criticism that one read along with the *Atlantic Monthly* and kindred journals. So with William Dean Howells, John Jay Chapman and others. But there is a new type of critic in vogue to-day, the sort who flavors his criticism with plain pep. He's a chuckle bringer rather than a writer to be yawned over.

Foremost in this school is Henry L. Mencken of literary pursuits and pastimes. Fearful that some one may discover how a man can be both so damnably clever and prolific at the same time, he assumes various disguises—Ben Hecht, for instance, when he is addressing the Chicago multitudes, or Owen Hatteras when flinging aphorisms and things at the readers of *Smart Set*.

To the average reader Mr. Mencken assumes the guise of a ferocious cat who takes her kittens by the scruff of the neck from their dark hole under the barn floor, rolls them in the sunlight and forces them to get out on their own.

"Some people take a tonic in the spring," said a well known artist the other day; "now I need William Blake in the spring of the year, when other people require beef, iron and wine." And Mencken is a mighty good tonic these spring days. His are not the writings for a pastel tinted brain. His *Book of Prefaces* offers virile and sane comment on Joseph Conrad and Theodore Dreiser, and in *Damn! A Book of Calumny*, the versatility of the man makes you feel more and more like the kitten rolled in the sunlight by that mother cat, though sometimes the claw scratches. Concerning the writings in this particular book one might paraphrase the author: "To the critic all things are to be criticised." And from George Washington, "tippler," to the absurdity of zoos, Mencken speeds on, never dull nor verbose. His words are always chosen with care, and the announcement

of a new book from his pen sends other critics to cover that they may gird up their loins and sharpen their swords for a Roman holiday.

The *Bookman* recently called Mencken "one of earth's curious creatures"; the *New Republic* declares him "funny, shrewd, clever, crude, hackneyed, stupid, conventional, swinelike."

Mr. Mencken may out-Shaw Shaw. He may set the tongues of the critics a-wagging, compel the Puritans to retire behind green blinds; for of these Puritans he believes that some may even become great, "as witness Herbert Spencer and Beelzebub." A legion of people find his writings a joy.

Lafayette and To-day

JAMES MOTT HALLOWELL, once Assistant Attorney-General of Massachusetts, believes that the same spirit of "making the world safe for democracy" brought Lafayette to the shores of America over a hundred years ago and now leads our countrymen to the battlefields of France. He prophesies in *The Spirit of Lafayette* a league for democracy, composed of all the nations of the world, as a result of the present struggle.

After a sketch of Lafayette's life, historical in the extreme, he quotes largely from Owen Wister's *The Pentecost of Calamity*, President Wilson's message directly before and after the declaration of war and from the works of M. André Chéradame. His message, which is intended for the soldiers in France, is of "the hope that goes with liberty and the undying strength that accompanies the knowledge that you are master of your own soul."

THE SPIRIT OF LAFAYETTE. By JAMES MOTT HALLOWELL. Doubleday, Page & Co. 75 cents.

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LAMB (CHARLES). *Elia and Last Essays of Elia*. First editions and first issues. 2 vols. London, 1823 and 1833. WORDSWORTH (WILLIAM). *Yarrow Revisited*. First edition, containing manuscript original Sonnet by Wordsworth. London, 1835. SMITH (WILLIAM). *History of the Province of New York*. London, 1757. GRIMM'S Popular Stories, (or Fairy Tales). Illustrated by Cruikshank. 2 vols., scarce first issue with all interesting points. London, 1823 and 1826. BROWNING (ROBERT). *Men and Women*. Presentation copy from Robert Browning to Mrs. Browning. Boston, 1856.

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