

Recent Acquisitions

In this era of constricted budgets, although we can report no harvest of notable books from the earlier centuries of printing, it is pleasant to record the acquisition of several interesting titles dating from the eighteenth century onwards. A number of these works describe, more or less authentically, the travels of their authors into regions of fact or fantasy.

In London in 1704 appeared a book entitled *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa*, allegedly written by "a native of the said Island." On the title page the author's name is given as George Psalmanaazaar, and by the name of that Old Testament Assyrian king he has been known ever since. Among his credentials was the fact that he ate raw meat, and after the publication of his book he was invited to Oxford to give instruction in the Formosan language; but, as he confessed in his *Memoirs* sixty years later, he had never seen Formosa, and his work is an imposture of the first magnitude. Our recently-acquired copy is a first edition. Horace Walpole ranked Psalmanazar's *Formosa* above Thomas Chatterton's poetic forgeries as a work of literary art; and Samuel Johnson, who knew Psalmanazar in his years of repentance, and respected his piety, remarked that he "should as soon think of contradicting a bishop" as Psalmanazar.

An eighteenth-century work of less dubious authenticity is William Bligh's *A Narrative of the Mutiny on Board His Majesty's Ship Bounty* (London, 1790). This relates, in the captain's own words, the uprising against him of part of the ship's crew during his first attempt to transport seedlings of the breadfruit tree from Tahiti to the West Indies, and it recounts likewise the hardships of Bligh's famous voyage of 3,600 miles in an open boat from Tofoa in the Tonga Islands to Timor in the Dutch East Indies. Our splendid, uncut copy of this rare first edition is a recent gift from one of our Friends, Mr. L. O. Cheever of Iowa City.

Also from the Cheever donation are two Golden Cockerel Press editions of works relating to the *Bounty* mutiny. Here, in two volumes, is *The Log of the Bounty* (1937), "published for the first time

from the manuscript in the Admiralty records," together with *The Journal of James Morrison* (1935), published from a manuscript in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Australia. Morrison was boatswain's mate on the *Bounty*, and though convicted by a court martial for his part in the mutiny, he received the king's pardon. In addition to their interest as Bountiana, these volumes are welcome as augmenting the Library's present holdings of some two dozen publications from the Golden Cockerel Press.

Two recently-acquired first editions of the nineteenth-century American author Herman Melville are *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life during a Four Months' Residence in a Valley of the Marquesas* (1846) and *Redburn: His First Voyage. Being the Sailor-Boy Confessions and Reminiscences of the Son-of-a-Gentleman, in the Merchant Service* (1849). Both of these works are minglings of fact and fiction. *Typee* tells of the hero's entry into and escape from a community of cannibals on an island in the Pacific, and indeed in 1842 while on a whaling voyage Herman Melville had deserted from his ship at Nuhu Hiva in the Marquesas and had spent four weeks with the island natives until he was picked up by an Australian whaling ship. *Redburn* has been called by John Masfield "a boy's book about running away to sea," but its theme of the initiation of innocence into evil has its darker side, and biographers of Melville, perhaps unadvisedly, have sought for parallels in Melville's own first sea voyage to Liverpool when he was a young man of nineteen.

Jules Verne's reputation as a writer of scientific fantasies seems now in the ascendant, and among volumes received in the Mabbott gift of Poe-related items is the English translation of Verne's *The Sphinx of the Ice Fields*. Verne's book was first published in France in 1897 under the title *Le Sphinx des Glaces*, but this translation by Mrs. Cashel Hoey is entitled *An Antarctic Mystery*. It is an attempted sequel to Edgar Allan Poe's longest piece of fiction, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. Readers of *Pym* will recall that the hero of that book sails on a whaling ship from Nantucket and disappears in the wastes of Antarctica. Verne's sequel takes the form of a search for the missing persons, and while Mrs. Hoey's translation is not a rare book, *An Antarctic Mystery* is not easily obtainable, and we are pleased to add this copy to our collections.

Poe's interest in travel narratives is perhaps not widely known, but he did review such books for the magazines of his day, and among these are reviews of some of John L. Stephens's books (for which see the article by Virginia Myers in this issue of *Books at Iowa*). Stephens' *Incidents of Travel in Central America* Poe characterized as "per-

haps the most interesting book of travel ever published." He tried his own hand at this sort of thing in *The Journal of Julius Rodman. Being an Account of the First Passage Across the Rocky Mountains of North America Ever Achieved by Civilized Man*. This work of fiction appeared anonymously in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* in six installments, and it was not until 1947, over 100 years later, that this unfinished story by Poe was first published in separate book form. Our recently-added volume is one of 500 copies printed in San Francisco by the Grabhorn Press, with colored wood engravings by Mallette Dean.

Covering some of the same ground, but in much more authoritative fashion, is the *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark, to the Sources of the Missouri, thence Across the Rocky Mountains and down the River Columbia to the Pacific Ocean*. This two-volume work, published in Philadelphia in 1814 by Bradford and Inskeep, is the first authentic edition. Our copy of this "most important of all overland narratives" is complete with the large folding map.

An experience of white men among the Indians of New France nearly a century and a half before the Lewis and Clark expedition is the subject of *The Travels of Father Jean de Brébuf among the Hurons of Canada as described by Himself*. Brébuf was in the field at a time when war between the Hurons and the Iroquois was at its height, and his grisly death at the hands of the Iroquois is described in one of Francis Parkman's volumes. This present book, translated from the French and Latin by Theodore Besterman, was issued in 1938 by the Golden Cockerel Press in a limited edition of 300 copies. The illustrations are the work of Eric Gill, and ours is copy number one from the library of Christopher Sandford, who was one of the associates of the press.

Life in the somewhat tamer wilderness of southern Michigan in the 1830s is the subject of Caroline Kirkland's *A New Home—Who'll Follow?* (1839). This is one of the classic forerunners of American literary realism. Mrs. Kirkland later returned from Michigan to live in New York City, where for a time she served as editor of *The Union Magazine*. Among her admirers was Edgar Allan Poe, who regarded her as "one of our best writers," though as an aside we might note that as editor Mrs. Kirkland once rejected Poe's "Ulalume" on the grounds that it didn't make much sense.

An early Iowa imprint recently added to our collections is *A Description of Central Iowa: With especial reference to Polk County*. This was published in Des Moines in 1858 and is number 347 in Alex-

ander Moffit's *A Checklist of Iowa Imprints, 1837-1860*. According to its title page, it was "prepared by a committee of citizens for the purpose of imparting full and reliable information . . . respecting the soil, climate, productions, prices of land, improvements, etc." Although there may be touches of hyperbole here and there, its picture of Iowa is undoubtedly more accurate than that given by Oll Coomes in his dime novel *Hawkeye Harry, the Young Trapper Ranger* (1878). The setting of this Beadle and Adams publication is northwestern Iowa, near Okoboji, sometime after the Spirit Lake massacre. Oll Coomes was a farmer and stockraiser in Cass County, Iowa, and a state legislator from 1877-1880, as well as a prolific and well-paid dime novelist, having seventy-seven titles to his credit. Eight of his novels have Iowa settings, and we would be grateful if any of our readers can help us acquire the others. They include *The Boy Spy*, *The Boy Chief*, *Thornpath the Trapper*, *Antelope Abe*, *Old Bald Head*, *Silent Shot the Slayer* (with a setting near Council Bluffs) and *The Dumb Spy*.

The relationship of Hawkeye Harry to Hurry Harry in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer* (1841) has yet to be studied, and the materials are at hand with the Library's acquisition of a first edition of *Deerslayer*, though the critic may find the Raccoon River a far cry from Glimmerglass.

By no means all of the travel by Americans in the nineteenth century was westward, and we have acquired an account, in first edition, of a transatlantic excursion by one of Cooper's younger contemporaries. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's first belletristic book, aside from some textbooks and translations, was his anonymously-published *Outre-Mer; a Pilgrimage beyond the Sea* (1835). Modelled to some extent on the early books of Washington Irving, Longfellow's travelogue presents pictures of European life in the early nineteenth century. "I have traversed France from Normandy to Navarre," he says; "smoked my pipe in a Flemish inn; floated through Holland in a Trekschuit; trimmed my midnight lamp in a German university; wandered and mused amid the classic scenes of Italy; and listened to the gay guitar and merry castanet on the borders of the blue Guadalquivir."

One of Longfellow's English contemporaries was Leigh Hunt, and during the past year we have acquired an extra-illustrated first edition copy of Hunt's *The Town: Its Memorable Characters and Events* (1848). This is an historical and topographical account of London, recalling the notable characters and events associated with the city. Each page of this original edition has been inlaid in large paper, and some 150 additional engravings and etchings have been inserted, usually facing the page where Hunt has alluded to the person or

place. Here is Cipriani's etching of Andrew Marvell and Kneller's portrait of Sir Samuel Garth, and here are full-page portraits of such Londoners as Francis Beaumont, Sir Thomas Gresham, Thomas Penant, Colley Cibber, Nell Gwyn, Benjamin West and Sir Isaac Newton—delightful additions to Hunt's delightful essays.

London and its environs is also the subject of a late eighteenth-century pocket guide entitled *The Ambulator; or the Stranger's Companion in a Tour Round London; Describing Whatever is Remarkable, either for Grandeur, Elegancy, Use, or Curiosity . . . collected by a Gentleman for his Private Amusement* (1774). By and large, this guide is arranged alphabetically by location, and a paragraph or a page or more of description will be found under "Greenwich," "Kew," "Ranelagh," "Twickenham," "Vaux-Hall Gardens" and the like. The flavor of the whole can be sampled by this extract from the very first entry: "ABBOTS LANGLEY . . . It is famous for being the birth-place of Nicholas Breakspeare, the only Englishman who ever attained to the papal dignity, who was made Pope by the title of Adrian IV and had his stirrup held by the Emperor Frederic while he dismounted." Or these lines from the entry under "HAMPTON COURT . . . This palace was magnificently built with brick by Cardinal Wolsey, who here set up 280 silk beds for strangers only, and richly stored it with gold and silver plate; but it raised so much envy against him, that, to screen himself from its effects, he gave it to King Henry VIII."

The English diarist Samuel Pepys prided himself on his collection of prints and drawings illustrating the topography of London, and also in the Pepysian library (which is still preserved intact in its red oak cases in Magdalene College, Cambridge) along with Pepys' collection of ballads and nautical books, has reposed, over the centuries, a manuscript of books ten to fifteen of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, translated into English by William Caxton. Books one through nine of this Caxton version had disappeared before Pepys' time and presumably had been lost forever. By one of those strange turns of fortune, however, the missing pages of this manuscript were discovered in 1964 among the papers amassed by Sir Thomas Phillipps, that amazing collector who died in 1872 but whose collections were so vast that they are still being dispersed one hundred years later. The two halves of Caxton's Ovid have now been reunited in the Pepysian Library, and a splendid facsimile edition of this entire manuscript is now among the recent acquisitions of our own library at The University of Iowa.