

CUS417/3.4

BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD.

LIST OF EARLY ENGLISH BOOKS.

Books printed in the Fifteenth Century ("Incunabula") have long occupied the attention of bibliographers, since Panzer first placed the study of them on a scientific basis in 1793. For English Incunabula Mr. Edward Gordon Duff's monumental work on the subject recently published by the Bibliographical Society will obviate the need of further investigation for many years to come. The next period is, for English books, from 1501 to 1640, stopping just short of the vast literature of the Civil War.

As long ago as 1884 the British Museum issued its catalogue of books printed or published in England before 1641, and, inspired by this, the Bibliographical Society has since then issued many important hand-lists of books issued by early English Printers. The Society, led by its President, Sir William Osler, and its Secretary, Mr. A. W. Pollard (M.A. of St. John's College, Oxford, Assistant Keeper of the Printed Books at the British Museum), is now making a special effort to complete a list of English books to 1640, and has found in Mr. G. R. Redgrave, one of its Past Presidents, a general editor willing to devote a large part of his time to carrying on the work, in collaboration with Mr. Pollard, and to provide generous financial help. The Cambridge University Library has published its own list, edited by Mr. C. Sayle (1901-7), and the John Rylands Library at Manchester has done the same (1895): and full use will be made of these and other printed catalogues in compiling a card list of all English books of the period 1501-1640 which can now be traced.

But, chiefly for financial reasons, the Bodleian, though "almost, if not quite, as rich as the British Museum in these books" (to quote Mr. Pollard's words), has not hitherto been able to add its quota of help. It is now, however, better able to devote funds to this purpose. And also a special opportunity occurs at the present time for filling this deplorable gap,

[P. T. O.]

in the fact that Mr. H. R. Plomer (author of a *History of Printing in England*, a *Dictionary of English Booksellers to 1640*, and other works) is available for the task of compiling the Bodleian list from the General Catalogue of Printed Books, and that while the entire cost of any copying, &c., required for the Bibliographical Society's purposes will be provided by Mr. Redgrave, the Bodleian will receive all the help which he and his collaborators can give, in compiling a list of its own books of this class, and they may perhaps assist in the efforts of any College Libraries which may desire to form or complete similar lists of their own.

Resolutions of the Curators.

The Resolutions of the Curators of the Bodleian Library, made on March 9, 1918, are as follows:—

The Curators desire to express their approval of the plan of forming a list of English books issued between 1501 and 1640 now in the Bodleian Library, and pass the following Resolutions:—

1. That the Librarian be authorized to employ Mr. H. R. Plomer for one year to excerpt from the General Catalogue of Printed Books all titles of books issued in the British Isles, and also all titles of books in the English language issued abroad, between 1501 and 1640, including such undated books and books bearing no place of issue, as may reasonably be supposed to be within the scheme. Books printed at Oxford may be omitted. The remuneration is not to exceed £150 in the year.

2. That the titles so selected be entered in short form on cards uniform with those already in use by the Bibliographical Society, without recourse to the books themselves for further particulars.

3. That Mr. G. R. Redgrave be invited, if willing, (1) to co-operate in the addition of printers' and publishers' names when not given in the General Catalogue, (2) to arrange for copying (at the expense of the Bibliographical Society) such slips as the Society may need, (3) to arrange, if it shall

seem desirable and practicable, for the utilization of the late Dr. Aitken's collections relating to early books in College Libraries and for completing his work : and generally to assist in carrying out the scheme.

4. That Mr. Plomer during his engagement be placed on the Extra Staff, and be desired, after a fortnight of work, to furnish an estimate of the time required for the perusal of the entire Catalogue.

5. That the card titles be the absolute property of the Bodleian Library.

6. That details in the above scheme may be varied by the Librarian, acting with the approval of a Committee consisting of Sir William Osler, the Librarian, Mr. Pollard, and Mr. Redgrave, who will report to the Curators from time to time on the progress and prospects of the scheme.

Early Books in College Libraries.

The following parts of the scheme for compiling a list of all books in Oxford College Libraries printed before 1601 have been (in some sense) accomplished :—

<i>Completed.</i>	<i>Partly done.</i>	<i>Not begun.</i>
Balliol.	All Souls.	Corpus.
Brasenose.	Exeter.	New College.
Christ Church.	Jesus.	Pembroke.
Hertford.	Keble (almost	St. John's.
Lincoln.	complete).	Trinity.
Magdalen.	Queen's.	Wadham.
Merton.		Worcester.
Oriel.		St. Edmund Hall.
University.		

It is suggested that Colleges may desire to take the opportunity of employing the services of Mr. Plomer, when his work at the Bodleian is finished, in drawing up or completing a similar list for their own libraries, either of *all* early books to 1600 (see above), or of all *English* books to 1640. The plan is so simple and short (the "one-line" system) that it

can be carried out from any good Catalogue or from existing slips; it seldom necessitates reference to the book itself; it produces a clear and business-like card catalogue; and it allows no opportunity for extravagation. The form of card ($4\frac{1}{2} \times 3$ in.) is

Shakespeare, William 1598 V. Simmes for A. Wise, London.

The Tragedie of King Richard the Second. [2nd ed.] 4°.

[*College and Shelfmark.*]

F. MADAN.

April 3, 1918.