

To Sir William Osler, Bart.
with the compliments of
Geo. Watson Cole.
Dec. 9, 1916.

⑦

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL PROBLEMS
WITH
A FEW SOLUTIONS

By
GEORGE WATSON COLE

Preprinted for Private Distribution from Papers of
the Bibliographical Society of America
Volume X, No. 3

CHICAGO
1916

ist.
D.

ists
idge

.Mft.

ner.
rt

1.1

rat
on
n,

#

6756

27.V. 19.

7

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL PROBLEMS
WITH
A FEW SOLUTIONS

By
GEORGE WATSON COLE

Preprinted for Private Distribution from Papers of
the Bibliographical Society of America
Volume X, No. 3

CHICAGO
1916

ist.
D.

ists
idge

.Mft.

ner.
rt

I.

rat
on
n.

Author's Separate
150 Copies Printed

Composed and Printed By
The University of Chicago Press
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

27.V. 19.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL PROBLEMS, WITH A FEW SOLUTIONS

BY GEORGE WATSON COLE

EVERY writer as he passes along the highway of life selects some object, picks it up, and casts it as his contribution on the cairn within which knowledge universal lies buried. The bibliographer passes that way, rearranges the heterogeneous mass, reduces it to order and symmetry, and by so doing erects to her a worthy and fitting monument. Without some adequate means of perpetuating thought, mankind would still be on a level with its progenitors, the cave men and lake-dwellers.

An uncontrollable desire to write has ever possessed our race. It first manifested itself in the pictograph, later in the ideograph, and, in its most malignant aspect, in the alphabet. Since the time of Cadmus it has assumed an incurable form and is now highly epidemic.

No proper consideration of bibliography can be undertaken without a recognition of the presence of the author. There had to be a considerable number of books before there could be any books about books. And so it is that bibliography forms one of the last links in a series of books having for their chief consideration authors and their writings. In this chain we find biographies, books of literary criticism, anecdotes and reminiscences of authors, edited collections of their writings, and, finally, books about books, or those that especially interest us

as bibliographers. These different classes of books, as might be expected, overlap each other to a greater or less extent. At one end of the chain we have the author writing books, at the other, the bibliographer describing them, and between them several intermediate links.

The author, catholic in his tastes, takes the whole domain of thought as his field. The literary critic restricts himself to the consideration of the writings of others, a calling, chosen perhaps, because of his lack of success in the field of literary creation, where the rewards, if success be attained, are infinitely greater. The biographer, contented with a more restricted field, confines his work to the consideration of a particular person. His labors interest us as bibliographers but slightly, unless perchance they deal with an author, and then only in so far as they relate to his career as a producer of books. The aim of the literary editor is to give to the world the best edition of the works of his favorite author, and he is naturally much interested in priority of editions and purity of texts. Lastly, the bibliographer, who stands at the end of our imaginary chain, is above all interested in editions and the changes they have undergone; but his interest, like that of the others, goes back, though in lesser intensity than theirs, through the works of an author to his personality.

No true artist has ever felt that he has imparted the best that was in him, and multitudes have passed away with their fondest visions unexpressed. The world has

ever been filled with mute, inglorious Miltons, with inspired but unprolific Raphaels, dreamers of dreams and beholders of visions, who never even put pen to paper or brush to canvas.

Books are the world's greatest means of preserving and transmitting the mental activities of mankind. Before the age of printing the processes by which books were made differed widely from those of the present day. Lacking the uniformity of print, changing in character from generation to generation, and from age to age, the science of paleography was of necessity developed and perfected, so that one age might the more easily decipher the works of those which preceded it.

The thoughts of an author, in their transmission from his brain to the public, necessarily pass through various processes, in each of which dangers constantly arise of their being distorted or changed. Many, perhaps most of these, are due to his own mental lapses, as well as the lapses of others, while engaged in preparing them for the public. Few if any authors have ever given to the world their richest thoughts. Even the masterpieces of authors necessarily lose much of their divine fire by the process they undergo in being transferred to manuscript and later to print.

The very process of our ordinary writing is a clog to the expression of thought, an aid that lags painfully behind, while the mind flies on far ahead and has repeatedly to come back to assist its slower interpreter, thus losing completely or obscuring the visions it has just seen.

ist.
D.

ists
idge

.Mft.

ner.
rt

[.I]

rat
on

n.)

The world loses much inspired literature because of its present cumbrous method of writing, but it is perhaps spared more than it loses. If the author, fired with the enthusiasm of his subject, is liable to make mistakes, what shall we say of the scrivener or typewriter, who undertakes to transcribe the thoughts and ideas of others, a process mentally deadening and largely mechanical?

It is a well-recognized fact that every time a manuscript is copied errors are bound to creep in, that every time a printer puts a manuscript in type numerous departures from the original text are bound to occur. The errors liable to be made in each of these cases, as is well known, are of a different character, as much so as the means employed in their production.

Some well-known writers, like Tennyson, have been in the habit of privately putting their manuscripts in type, and polishing them at their leisure, before finally permitting them to be published. Examples of this are copies of Byron's poems, *The Lament of Tasso* and *Manfred*, that exist with manuscript corrections and alterations in the author's handwriting. These are not proofs in the ordinary sense of the term, but sheets actually printed, folded, and stitched, and are quite unlike the first editions of these poems.

Authors' manuscripts are preserved in which the workings of the writers' minds are plainly visible. In some places long stretches appear in which the words apparently came trooping, as if by inspiration, needing

few, if any, changes; in others, language seems to have come with hesitation and laboriously, as is witnessed by the frequent erasures and interlineations. In one place the thought is found pruned, amplified, or embellished, while in another it is delightfully spontaneous. These intimate products of the author's brain and hand are eagerly sought for and treasured by bibliophiles, their interest and value being measured, as is but natural, by the relative prominence and distinction of the author.

Such are some of the obstacles with which the author has to contend in putting his thoughts into proper form for transmission to his readers. Let us now suppose that he has struggled through all this, and that at last his manuscript—in his own none too legible hand, transcribed by an amanuensis, or in typewritten form—is ready for the printer; that it has passed the rigid censorship of the professional reader and has at last, to his great joy, been accepted for publication.

Before it can appear in print, it has yet to undergo still greater ordeals at the hands of those, who, devoid of the afflatus that has upborne the author, are in comparison mere machines, and on whom it devolves to change his work from manuscript to print. These, to mention only the most important, are the compositor, the proof-reader, the pressman, and the binder.

There is little doubt but that we should have more accurate printing if both the author and bibliographer, as well as the proof-reader, better understood the processes of the printer. Not only would we have finer and

ist.
D.

ists
idge

.Mft.

ner.
rt

[.I]

rat
on

n.]

more accurate books, but more perfect descriptions of them. From the author's point of view few books are perfect; from the bibliographer's, the only perfect book is the one caught on its way from the printer's office to the binder's, or, after it has been folded and gathered with all its inserts, before it has been taken in hand by the sewer, before the binder's shears have shorn it of any of its original material, and before his craft has skilfully concealed the printer's irregularities.

Bibliography claims as its province the consideration of all the methods by which thought is transmitted from the mind of the author to the public, but more especially the perpetuation of thought, in these latter days, by means of the printing-press.

A printed book is by no means the simple thing it seems; on the contrary, it is a very composite affair. Thoroughly to understand its complexity, it is necessary to go back to its very genesis and to follow its growth step by step, until it is ready to be placed in the hands of its readers. These steps have varied but little during the entire history of book making. More or less durable substances have been used as vehicles for transmission, stone or clay, papyrus, parchment or paper, depending upon the advance mankind had made toward civilization. The bibliographer needs therefore to be somewhat of a linguist, something of a paleographer; but, above all, he must be familiar with the numerous processes which enter into the mechanical construction of books, more

especially with those connected with the printed volume, as his work is most likely to be mainly confined to the latter, though no information he may possess in other fields will ever come amiss.

There is every reason to believe that in the early days of printing the art was employed to impose upon the public by passing off the printed book as the work of the scrivener. Hence it was made to resemble as closely as possible the manuscript of those days, a masterpiece, indeed, of patient and elaborate hand work. The first printed books were therefore close imitations of the best products of the scrivener's art, and so it came about that the earliest products of the printing-press were themselves masterpieces of printing, and as such have scarcely ever been surpassed, as specimens of the printer's art, even to the present day.

When the public could no longer be deceived by the resemblance of the printed book to its manuscript brother, and the art of printing had become common knowledge, a decline in quality and workmanship began to take place.

The earliest book printed in the English language appeared toward the end of the fifteenth century (*ca.* 1475). English literature was then in its formative state, and continued to grow until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the drama, the characteristic literary expression of that age, reached its zenith in the plays of Shakespeare and his fellow-dramatists. Contemporary with this class of literature appeared, in 1611, a work of

ist.
D.

ists
idge

.Mft.

ner.
rt

[I.]

rat
on

n,)

an entirely different order, the Authorized Version of the Bible. It is generally recognized that this and the First Folio of Shakespeare, which appeared twelve years later, in 1623, did more than any other two books to crystalize the English language into the literary form we now possess. This is apparent from the fact that, although three centuries have elapsed since their appearance, both of these books can be read today with almost as much ease as the latest literature to be found in our book-stores.

At the Bretton Woods meeting, in 1909, the attention of this Society was called by Professor George P. Baker to the puzzling character of the products of the Elizabethan printers, as exemplified in the quarto editions of the plays of that day. This is a field that has been made the subject of much investigation by our friends of the Bibliographical Society in England. There is little doubt that the work accomplished, with books of that age, by members of our Sister-Society, has done much to develop the aims and scope of bibliography and to reduce it to a more systematic basis. This is shown in a marked degree by such articles as those of Alfred W. Pollard, Falconer Madan, Walter W. Greg, Ronald B. McKerrow, and others, in the more recent publications of that Society. One has but to read their papers with some care to note the advance that the bibliography of the present day has made over that of but a few decades ago.

The bibliographer of today, as already intimated, is no longer content merely to describe books or to make lists of those dealing with a specific subject. Rather,

he studies the book as a composite object, analyzes its component parts, and tries to conceive of it as it passed from the hands of the printer to those of the binder. In fact, he is never so happy as when a volume comes to him loosely sewed, in old or contemporary binding, or, better still, in stitched sheets, so that he can examine its separate parts and see how they were put together. Viewed from this standpoint, modern bibliography may not inaptly be termed the comparative anatomy of the book. Ideally, therefore, the perfect book, as already stated, is the one that has been printed and folded with its full complement of plates, maps, portraits, cancels, etc.—is, in fact, the book in the exact condition in which the binder prepared it to be placed in the hands of his sewer.

The bibliographer therefore tries to picture the book in this, its elementary state, as composed of a series of units or sheets, each of which has undergone at least two separate operations: it has been printed on one side and dried, and then turned over and printed on the other. Now this, especially with the complicated output of the Elizabethan printers, is no light task; for, it is probably safe to say that every device that printers or binders could possibly adopt is exemplified in these books. As Mr. McKerrow says:

The numerous processes through which a book passes are all perfectly simple and very little trouble will suffice for the understanding of them. What is needed is that they shall be grasped sufficiently clearly for the book to be always regarded, not as a

1st.
D.

ists
idge

.Kft

ner.
rt

[.I

ra
on

n,)

unit, but as an assemblage of parts each of which is the result of a clearly apprehended series of processes.

. . . . Every book presents its own problems and has to be investigated by methods suited to the particular case. And it is just this fact, that there is always a chance of lighting on new problems or new methods of demonstration, that with almost every new book we take up we are in new country unexplored and trackless, and that yet such discoveries as we may make are real discoveries, not mere matters of opinion, but provable things that no amount of after-investigation can shake, that makes this kind of research, trifling as it may at first sight appear, one of the most absorbing of all forms of historical enquiry.

Bibliographers, in their endeavor to reduce their work to a more exact system, have considered some features of books as axiomatic, among these, that no book is complete unless it has an even number of leaves, by which is meant an even number of leaves in the preliminaries of a volume, as well as in its body or text. This, we venture to say, is not a safe premise upon which to predicate the completeness of a book. The principle, while right in the main, is based upon incorrect deductions.

A collation by signatures, to be logical, should begin where the printer began his work and not with the preliminary leaves. It should begin with the text, especially if that begins with a full sheet or signature-mark—a pretty conclusive indication that the work was set in type from manuscript and is not a page-for-page reprint. In the latter case the text may by chance begin anywhere else than on the first leaf of a signature. By adopting this

method, instead of beginning with the preliminary leaves, when we reach the end of the book we shall find ourselves in the same position that the printer was in, and in a far better position to understand his problems and how he went about to solve them.

After having printed the last sheet but one, the printer was of necessity guided by the amount of matter yet to be put in type. This may have been enough to fill a single page, an entire leaf, two, three, or even four leaves, or perhaps a complete sheet. In the last event his course was obviously clear. But how about the others? The preliminaries yet remained to be printed. Was he going to press with a single leaf, for example, to complete the end of the book, in order to begin the preliminary pages with a new sheet? This is unlikely. The amount of preliminary matter being known (as it was not when he began printing) he would cut his garment to fit his cloth and print a full sheet or such a portion of one as may have been necessary to complete the book *and* its preliminaries. Hence in the collation of many volumes it is necessary to take into consideration the possibility that the first pages of the preliminaries may have been imposed as a part of the same sheet that was used at the end of the volume.

In our attempts to account for the processes that took place in the printing-office, it is safe to assume—unless there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary—that the printer never did anything by which he wasted or lost time, labor, or material—in other words, that he always

1st.
D.ists
idge

.Kft

ner.
rt

[.I

ra
on

n,)

did what was to be accomplished in the simplest and most direct or economical way; that he never printed a single page or two, when he had type enough set to print a half sheet or a whole one.

Happily we are able to show that what we have just been trying to explain is not merely a theory, but has actually occurred in practice; and, if once, why not repeatedly under similar circumstances? *The Remembrancer*, London, 1775-84, was published in seventeen volumes, in signatures of four leaves each. In vols. II. and XIV., the title-page occupies a single leaf, followed by the text, which begins on the first leaf of sheet B. The last signature in this and in nearly all the other volumes of the set consists of but three leaves. As ordinarily given, a collation of these volumes would assume the existence of a blank leaf before the title-page and of another at the end of the volume, the latter completing the usual sheet of four leaves. Were the bibliographer to make this assumption, he would place on record two leaves which never existed in any of these volumes. For it happens that some, if not all, of these volumes were published in parts. An examination made of several of these parts, loosely stitched, showed that the title-pages of vols. II., III., and IV. were *and still remained* integral parts of the last sheets of their respective volumes. It is highly probable, therefore, that the other volumes of this work, containing similar leaves, were treated in like manner. The bibliographer should therefore be on his guard not to fall into the error of adding to his collations leaves

that never by any possibility belonged to the volumes he describes.

A few examples of the perplexing problems that confront the bibliographer who has to deal with irregularities in books, especially with the somewhat erratic output of the English printing-press prior to the year 1640, may prove of interest. The preliminary and end leaves of volumes, as is well known, and as we have just seen, are those which usually give the most trouble. Furthermore, during the three hundred and more years that have elapsed since these volumes were printed, many of them have been neglected or abused and, with bindings loose or entirely gone, the outer leaves one by one have disappeared or become mutilated and soiled. When they have been rescued, and their rarity or value recognized, they have been sumptuously bound and the effects of their previous misfortunes skilfully minimized or removed.

Every leaf in a book is supposed to have attached at its back a corresponding or companion leaf in order to permit of its being firmly sewed. So, when we find an uneven number of leaves in a sheet or gathering, it is customary to conclude that a leaf is missing (as in the case just described), even though it be a blank one and may have been removed by the original or a subsequent binder. Such leaves, when found in perfect copies, instead of being blank, sometimes contain half-titles, wood cuts, imprimaturs, lists of errata, or other printed matter without which the book would certainly be

1st.
D.

ists
idge

.Kft

ner.
rt

[.I

ra
on

a,)

incomplete. Blank leaves are missing from some books in modern bindings because they were originally used as paste-downs, i.e., pasted to the inside of the covers of the binding. These are sometimes found so employed, especially in volumes bound in old, limp vellum. It need hardly be said that when such volumes are rebound all evidence of the existence of these blank leaves disappears, and that but for their occasionally turning up in their original covers the use they were put to would never be suspected. An article in the current number of *The Library* (April, 1916), written by E. M. May, calls attention to such an example, and three others are recorded among the *Jesuit Relations*, in the Church collection. In one of these, curiously enough, the last two blank leaves had both been pasted to the cover, one above the other.

In some volumes in modern binding, the owners have carefully preserved the original fly-leaves of contemporary paper. These need not, if due care is taken, be mistaken for parts of the first or last signatures. The method of determining whether blank leaves are or are not a part of the book in which they are found is interestingly shown in Marston's *Works*, London, 1633. This is a reissue, with a new title-page, of his *Tragedies and Comedies Collected into One Volume*, published earlier the same year. The reissue has a dedication to "the Right Honourable, the Lady Elizabeth Carie, Viscountess Fawkland." In this epistle dedicatory, Marston, in giving his reasons for the change of title, says that the

chief causes of the aspersions cast upon the plays of his day were their obscene speeches, scenes of ribaldry, and scurrilous taunts and jests; that, though his plays were written in his youth, they were free from those odious features; so that, in his then declining age, he had nothing to be ashamed of in this respect; and that, in view of the general unpopularity of plays, he would have been more careful in revising them, when they first appeared in their collected form, had he not been far distant. These considerations, coupled with the fact that the very words "tragedies" and "comedies" had themselves become unpopular, led him to change the title of the volume to *The Workes of John Marston*, instead of *Tragedies and Comedies*, that under which it first appeared.

At the end of this volume are three blank leaves necessary to complete the last signature (Dd) of eight leaves. Had they been absent, the question would naturally arise, What, if anything, was printed on them? Happily, in the copy examined, all of them are found to be blank and genuine. On the last leaf (Dd8) is a portion of a water-mark, plainly to be seen in the upper inner margin. This exactly coincides with other parts of a water-mark in the same position in leaves 1, 4, and 5, the four combined forming the complete water-mark of a single sheet. The remaining leaves (2, 3, 6, and 7) show no traces of a water-mark, but the relative positions and distances between the perpendicular chain-lines, as they meet at the tops of the leaves, are identical, showing that they form parts of the same sheet and that

all these leaves originally formed a complete sheet. This illuminating example shows the necessity of a careful examination of the texture of the paper, its chain-lines and water-marks, in determining the genuineness of the leaves composing a sheet or signature.

This description, complicated though it seems, can be made quite plain if a sheet of ruled paper with an improvised water-mark is folded three times, so that the chain-lines are perpendicular and the up-and-down bolts come on the last four leaves. If then each page is numbered and marked *blank* or *text*, as the case may be, the description given above can easily be followed.

In order to avoid the pitfalls and snares that abound in printed books, especially those of the early seventeenth century, we must in all cases put ourselves as nearly as possible in the position of the printer and follow his progress step by step, if we would not fall into error in accounting for and describing the anomalies we are constantly meeting in the books printed during that period. When we find anything unusual in a book, the first question should be, What was the problem that confronted the printer, and how could he most easily and naturally solve it?

Another assumption, hitherto adopted by bibliographers, is that a leaf missing in the middle of a volume has been cancelled and that the volume is therefore incomplete. This view doubtless originated from the finding of cancels (leaves printed to take the place of

others that have been removed) tipped to the stubs of leaves that have been torn out (cancelled leaves). This deduction in most cases proves true. But suppose that the missing leaf is the last one of a signature: must we decide that the printer, after having made the necessary corrections in type, went to press with a single leaf so that it could be pasted to the stub of the cancelled leaf? Hardly! As he had yet to proceed with the printing of the rest of the book, is it not more reasonable to suppose, nay, is it not almost certain, that he imposed the type of the cancel as the first leaf of the following sheet and tore out and threw away the imperfect one? An interesting example in point is that of a leaf missing in all known copies of Thomas Churchyard's *Miserie of Flaunders*, London, 1579. Sheet C has only three leaves, but the text, as the catchword indicates, runs on without a break to the first leaf of D. It is quite probable that for some reason, now unknown, the last two pages of C4 were cancelled, and that, instead of reprinting a single leaf, the printer, after having made the necessary changes or corrections, reprinted the matter on the first leaf of sheet D instead of reprinting a single leaf or the whole of sheet C, so that on collating the book by signatures two pages or a complete leaf appears to be missing; notwithstanding, the book is undoubtedly complete.

An interesting case of a suppressed leaf and the subsequent discovery of its contents is found in Sir John Beaumont's *Bosworth Field, a Poem*, published in 1639.

1st.
D.ists
idge

.Kft

ner.
rt

[I]

ra
on

a,

In all known copies of this work, leaf N3, pp. 181-182, has been cancelled. The identity of the suppressed matter was surmised by some unknown person. He, or someone to whom he revealed his conjectured discovery, seems to have had a leaf printed, containing two poems which he supposed had been printed on the missing leaf. This substituted leaf appears in some copies. Now it happens that the cancelled leaf has been so clumsily removed in a few instances that the initial letters of the lines are still to be seen on the stubs. The first letters of the words of the poems on the substituted leaf do not correspond with these initial letters. It remained for Mr. F. G. Kenyon, in 1899, to identify the missing poem, by means of these initial letters, as a poem contained in a manuscript volume of Beaumont's poems preserved in the Stowe collection of manuscripts in the British Museum. Both the original and the supposititious poems are printed in the Grolier Club's *Catalogue: English Writers from Withſer to Prior*, I. (1905), pp. 27, 28. It is the possibility of new discoveries of a like nature that is one of the principal allurements of bibliography.

Much conjecture has been occasioned by the fact that the text of all known copies, and so presumably of all copies, of Sir Fulke Greville's *Certaine Learned and Elegant Workes*, published in 1633, begins on p. 23. The missing pages, 1-23, are supposed to have contained *A Treatise on Religion*, which, Corser informs us, was suppressed by Archbishop Laud. This poem, consisting of 114 six-line stanzas, was published about forty years

later (1670) in the *Remains of Sir Fulke Greville in Poems Never Before Printed*.

All copies of Captain John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*, which originally appeared in 1624, seemingly lack an entire signature (O, pp. 97-104). Their omission remained unexplained until Henry Stevens, the well-known London bibliographer and bookseller, discovered by differences in type, initial letters, and headlines, that the manuscript of the book had been given out to two different printers and that this apparent omission arose from their mistake in calculating the number of pages the first portion of the manuscript would fill. The second printer began his work with sheet P, but when the first printer had finished setting up his part, he found that he had not even enough matter to fill sheet N, to say nothing of sheet O, which had also been allotted him. In order to complete his last sheet, he filled it with some verses to which he prefixed this explanation:

Now seeing there is thus much Paper here to spare, that you should not be altogether cloyed with Prose; such Verses as my worthy Friends bestowed vpon New England, I here present you, because with honestie I can neither reiect nor omit their courtesies.

A volume might be filled with instances in which interesting and valuable discoveries have been made by careful bibliographical investigations and comparisons. As already intimated, bibliography is taking on fresh interest and is rapidly being reduced to a more systematic if not to a scientific basis.

Of an objectionable feature, suppressed in subsequent editions, we have an interesting example in Marston's play *The Malcontent*. An examination of four copies, all dated 1604, discloses some interesting features. These copies represent three different editions, each printed from a separate setting of type. At the beginning of the third scene of the first act, in the first two of these editions, there appears an expression that, as will presently be seen, must have been received by the public with the greatest disfavor. The passage in the most complete of these copies (Kemble-Devonshire Collection, vol. 463, no. 4) occurs just after a song which is followed by the entrance of Malevole. Pietro, who has ceased speaking during the song, resumes his part:

Pie. See: he comes: now fshall you heare the extreamitie of a Malecontent: he is free as ayre: he blowes ouer euery man. And fir, [addressing *Malevole*] whence come you now?

Mal: From the publicke place of much diffimulation, (the Church.)

Pie. What did/t there?

Mal: Talke with a Vfurer: take vp at intereft.

And so the play runs on.

Now the remarkable thing is that Kemble, the actor, a former owner of this copy, has written on the margin of the title-page this comment: "This is the only Copy I ever saw of this Play, in which the word *Church* was not erased." This statement is fully borne out by the condition of two other copies.

In the second (b), an imperfect copy, laid into the volume just described, the objectionable word has been

27.V. 19.

entirely cut out with a knife or some sharp instrument. In a third (*c*), which was also owned by Kemble (vol. 59, no. 1), the word "Church" has been completely erased by scratching.

In *d*, the fourth copy (Hoe Sale, 1:2217), the offensive words have disappeared, but the parentheses in which they were originally inclosed have been retained, indicating an omission, thus:

Mal: From the publick place of much diffimulation. ()

These copies not only disclose in an interesting and original manner the contemporary reception given to this play; but, what is of greater value, the sequence of editions, especially of the one just described, which is unquestionably the last of the three.

Bibliographers everywhere have heretofore labored and are still laboring under great disadvantages—first of all, from the faulty descriptions of books handed down by their predecessors. These have led to much confusion as to editions, in numerous instances giving rise to apocryphal ones that have never existed, except in the minds of their creators. The inability to compare copies side by side is a disadvantage which will always exist but which will in the future be overcome to a great degree by the better and more minute descriptions now exacted, and by the ease and trifling expense of producing photo-mechanical facsimiles for purposes of comparison. The American bibliographer has in the past labored under the great disadvantage of not having the books to describe.

Fortunately, our collections of rare books are now so increased in numbers and importance that in some fields work can be carried on almost as successfully here as in the libraries of the Old World.

The extra-illustrator, as well as the zealous collector, who takes pleasure in binding into his copies variant plates, pages, or other matters, have in their turn done much to confuse the bibliographer in his work. An excellent example in point is the set of De Bry's *Voyages* brought together by James Lenox, in which he bound a number of variant leaves, so that it is now impossible, without taking the volume apart, to distinguish between the original leaves and those he inserted.

After all, the examination of several copies side by side is the surest way of arriving at an accurate description of any book. What would have been said several years ago if one had picked up a volume in an American collection and found on a fly-leaf a penciled note couched in these words, *presque unique*, while at the same time four other copies lay within reach of his hand? But even this is no longer an exaggeration. True, the words just quoted may have been written by some unscrupulous bookseller who was trying to enhance the value of his wares, perhaps by one who knew no better; or, they may have been copied from some untrustworthy source, without any attempt to establish their accuracy.

The aims and scope of present-day bibliography may perhaps be summarized in the words that follow. A model bibliography should give:

27.V. 19.

1. A full and accurate description of a perfect copy of a book, both from a material and literary point of view, so full that another copy, or even a considerable fragment of it, can be identified with absolute certainty. A description, to accomplish this purpose, should invariably include, especially in the case of old books—

a) Size by fold;
b) The enumeration and number of signature-marks and total number of leaves;

c) A minute and full description of each separate portion of the book, including captions, and more especially of its preliminary and end leaves.

2. Following this description, may well be given references to sources where information regarding the book and other editions of it can be found, as well as some condensed information regarding its place in the literature of the subject of which it treats. References to or apt quotations from critical estimates of the work, especially if they be by writers of recognized authority, are always of interest and value.

3. The location of other copies when known, or when it can be ascertained, is highly desirable, especially if the work described is one of great rarity.

4. Interest is added if some details can be given concerning the author and his immediate connection with the work in question, such as pertinent literary anecdotes, and incidents connected with the writing of the book or with its publication and public reception.

Where this can be done bibliography will be lifted out of the class of work considered dry and uninteresting,

ist.
D.

ists
idge

.Mft.

ner.
rt

[.I

rat
on

n,

and will take its place among the recognized intellectual activities of the day; it will afford a field of investigation not only attractive but full of interest and adventure; it will become accurate, comprehensive, readable, authoritative even. And who knows but that in the future it may become a favorite field of effort, crowded, instead of avoided as now, and one of the distinctive and prominent pursuits of lovers of knowledge? If so, a classification and evaluation of the field of knowledge, will be developed or, at least, of special sections of it, which in themselves will in a greater degree than hitherto be sought for, as aids, by literary workers. I am sure that all bibliographers will welcome the day when the publication of a bibliography will be as eagerly looked for and anticipated as are now the works of writers in some other fields of literary activity.

ist.
D.

ists
idge

.Kft.

ner.
rt

[.I

rat
on

n.

#

1756

27.V. 19.

ist.
D.

ists
idge

.Kft.

ner.
rt

[.I

rat
on

n.

#

956

27.V. 19.