

THE MANUSCRIPT MAN

A RECENT sale of rare documents and letters at Sotheby's has once again drawn attention to the renowned library formed by that 19th-century prince of collectors, Sir Thomas Phillipps of Broadway in Worcestershire.

Most of us at some time or other indulge a passion for collecting things; when we are young we are usually content with cigarette cards or stamps or autographs. Later on our fancies may turn to books or coins, or, if we are wealthy, to porcelain, pictures, or precious manuscripts—or more wealth. Collecting is one of the most fascinating of all pastimes, and well-nigh universal; but there never was a greater collector than Sir Thomas Phillipps.

Born in 1792, son of a wealthy father, Thomas Phillipps displayed his love for literature quite early in life, spending all his pocket-money on books while a schoolboy at Rugby (and we can be quite sure that his pocket-money was more than a nimble weekly half-crown). His years at Oxford University not unnaturally fanned his literary passions, and, his father dying young, he was able to indulge them without stint.

Thomas Phillipps himself told how he began "with purchasing everything that lay within my reach, to which I was instigated by reading various accounts of the destruction of valuable manuscripts. . . . My principal search has been for historical, and particularly unpublished manuscripts, whether good or bad, and more particularly those on vellum. My chief desire for preserving vellum manuscripts arose from witnessing the unceasing destruction of them by goldbeaters; my search for charters or deeds, by their destruction in the shops of glue-makers and tailors. As I advanced, the ardour of the pursuit increased, until at last I became a perfect vello-maniac (if I may coin a word), and I gave any price that was asked. Nor do I regret it, for my object was not only to secure good manuscripts for myself, but also to raise the public estimation of them, so that their value, might be more generally known, and, consequently, more manuscripts preserved."

From those literary hunting expeditions, side by side with his zeal for collecting Phillipps derived a love of manuscripts

for their literary value; and he became the greatest buyer of his age both at home and on the Continent. He travelled Europe, attending sales of great collections, and returning with a vast treasury of documents and books. At home he was equally active in securing precious data relating to kings, abbeys, manors, and landed families.

In spite of this, Sir Thomas Phillipps was an open-air man as happy in a field or garden as in library or study, and taking as much pride in his estates as he did in being a member of learned societies. A full and happy life was his, and all the time he went on collecting. When he died in 1872 he left a collection of manuscripts numbering some 60,000.

Napoleon's Letters

Gradually his library has been dispersed, and sales of his treasures at various times since his death have realised over £200,000. The wide range of his interests is reflected in the catalogue of the recent sale at Sotheby's, which listed such diverse items as 1000 Letters by Napoleon and his generals; the charter of a seventh-century King of Kent; a document of 1587 recording preparations against the Armada; a letter written by Charles the First in prison, and another by his son Charles the Second in exile; a 15th-century Neapolitan Cookery Book with quaint recipes; the Earl of Surrey's Household Book with the exact account and cost of every breakfast, dinner, and supper throughout the years 1513-1524; and a catalogue of Henry the Eighth's jewels, including his Cruetts of Silver and Gobbettes of Gold.

Sir Thomas Phillipps was a zealous snapper-up of literary trifles as well as treasures. Nothing was too small for his vast collecting net, everything written fascinated him; and he was not merely content to buy manuscripts, for his notebooks showed that he also studied them. He was a remarkable man, and there will surely never be another collector like him.

Salute to the Sugar-Beet

THE CN's recent article, Salute to the Sugar-Beet, has aroused considerable interest, and a correspondent sends us a few more details about this great British industry which has grown to such vast proportions since our first sugar-beet factory was built. This, in fact, was not at Kidderminster but at Cantley near Norwich in 1912.

The seed, which is destined to produce sugar, is a small seed ball growing on a branching stalk of the sugar-beet plant. Each seed ball contains two or three germs and many plants spring from a single seed ball. The seeds are today sown in rows 18 inches apart at the rate of 15 to 20 pounds of seed to the acre, so the figures given in the CN article were misleading. The growing plants are thinned so as to leave about eleven inches between the plants in the row.

The British Sugar Corporation Limited has prepared especially for use in schools a large pictorial poster describing the factory processes of turning beet into sugar. The posters can be obtained by schools from the Corporation's offices at 134 Piccadilly, London, W 1.

VALUABLE VOYAGES

JUST a hundred years ago the Hakluyt Society was formed to print "the most rare and valuable voyages, travels, and geographical records"; and to mark this the society has held a festival.

Richard Hakluyt was an English geographer, born in Herefordshire. In 1589 he published The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation, which are still widely read and studied. He left many other manuscripts which have been printed by the Hakluyt Society.

Terriers of Tomorrow

BRITAIN'S Territorial Army is to be re-formed on January 1.

This army of part-time soldiers was formed in 1907 for Home Defence only, but when war broke out in 1914 most of its members volunteered for overseas service, and the Divisions of the Territorial Force, as it was then known, fought with distinction on many fronts. It was renamed the Territorial Army in 1921, and when war's clouds were gathering in 1939 many thousands of volunteers flocked to its ranks. By September 3, many Territorial units had already been embodied, and while the fighting lasted every war front had its Territorial Divisions.

Now this grand army is to be reformed once more as a peacetime army of part-time volunteers.

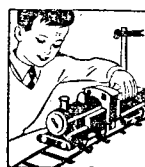
Mr Bellenger, Secretary for War, has told the House of Commons that this new army will include not only infantry divisions, but also armoured formations and an airborne division. General recruiting will not be opened before April 1, 1947, though commanders will have been appointed before then. In the late summer of 1950 the Territorial Army will be considerably enlarged by the addition of young conscripts, who will have done their regular soldiering and will have to follow on with some Territorial service.

The Government's aim, clearly, is to make the new Territorial Army up-to-date and really effective as a second line to the Regular Army. Disarmament cannot be entertained until the world has become more settled, and the absolute power of Uno has been effectively asserted.



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OLD SCROOGE AND TINY TIM

A Picture Story For Christmas

A CHRISTMAS CAROL, the famous story by Charles Dickens, has been laughed over and wept over by millions for more than a century. It was first published in 1843. Next week the CN begins to unfold this little masterpiece of a Christmas tale as a serial story in pictures.

As humorous and delightful today as when Dickens—himself laughing and weeping, we are told—first wrote it, the narrative has just enough of that exciting "creepiness" on which tradition insists in a Christmas story. It has pathos, too, and although we today are supposed to be hardened against what is too often dismissed as "sentimentality," we should have to be stonier-hearted than old Scrooge to withstand the pathetic appeal of poor, lame Tiny Tim.

The central figure in the story is a rich old skinflint, Scrooge, who hates Christmas and calls it a lot of humbug. He is visited at Christmastime by four ghosts who strive to make him penitent, and in the end succeed.

More copies of the CN are now available, but newagents cannot cater for chance sales. The only way to make sure of your CN regularly each week is by placing an order with your newsagent.

Many People Are Needed

THIS YEAR TO PLAY THE PART OF FATHER CHRISTMAS

If we are to make it a real peace Christmas for our people in the East End of London—especially the children. Will you please do so with a gift to THE REV. RONALD F. W. BOLLOM, Supt., THE EAST END MISSION (Founded 1885), Bromley Street, Commercial Road, Stepney, E. 1.

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