

[Inquiries or contributions to this department should be addressed to John E. Robinson, the Editor, who will be pleased to render to readers such services as are possible.]

American collectors are interested in the sale by Christie, Manson & Woods of London, England, on December 10, 11, and 12, of the first part of the collection of rare early-printed German books from the library of C. Fairfax Murray. These books were collected chiefly for their illustrations and are mostly in fine bindings. Included among them are five block-books. There are examples from the presses of Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland, all of which produced a typography and illustration different from those of the Latin countries. The period included embraces the years 1465 to 1680, the first date being approximately the date of the block-books and the last that of the book containing Rembrandt's etching to Jan Six's "Medea."

The majority of the books are of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but a few of the seventeenth were included by the collector on account of their Dürer interest. The woodcuts are of remarkable importance and completeness, commencing with the earliest xylographs—that is, the "Apocalypse," "Ars Memorandi," "Ars Moriendi," "Biblia Pauperum," and "Speculum Humanae Salvationis." The famous early German presses at Augsburg, Basel, Köln, Frankfurt, Lübeck, Mainz, Nürnberg, Strassburg, and Ulm are all well represented, besides those of Antwerp, Gouda, Louvain, Bamberg, Brünn, Leipzig, Rougemont, Schiedam, Speier, and Zwolle. The collection contains many fine and important books from the Ashburnham, Marquis d'Adda, William Morris, Huth, Pembroke, and other recently dispersed libraries. The second part of the Murray library, consisting of rare early-printed French and Italian books, collected chiefly for their illustrations, will be sold in the new year.

At the same auction house on February 4, 1918, and the three following days, will be sold the Medici Archives, consisting of rare autograph letters, records, and documents, 1084-1770, including 166 holograph letters of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the property of the Marquis Cosmo de' Medici and the Marquis Averardo de' Medici. Almost all of Lorenzo's letters in this collection are addressed to Pietro Alamanni, Florentine ambassador at Milan and afterwards at Rome and Naples. The other papers are letters received by Lorenzo, and sent on by him to Alamanni for reference, copies of Lorenzo's instructions to other ambassadors or of their dispatches to him, the Florentine government's instructions to Alamanni, Lorenzo's letters to the pope and so on. Four centuries ago ambassadors treated official correspondence, that remained in their hands, as their own private property. About a hundred years after Pietro Alamanni's day, Raffaello di Francesco de' Medici married Costanza Alamanni, and there is every reason to suppose that through this marriage, Lorenzo's correspondence found its way into the family archives and this explains how state papers of such extraordinary importance as the holograph letters chance to exist,

unknown to historians, in the hands of a younger branch of the Medici family which branched off from the parent trunk 600 years ago.

The unpublished love letters of James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier poet, written to Miss Bottsford, an Indiana school teacher, now dead, mention of whose sale to Gabriel Wells, of New York, appeared in a recent issue of *THE DIAL*, and which were resold to a well-known private collector, have been sought by relatives of Mr. Riley. They got into communication with the present owner of the letters, and tried to purchase them from him. His answer was that he intended to keep the letters, but that he was willing to have relatives of the poet look over the correspondence and reach an agreement whereby some of the letters, containing things which ought not to be preserved, should be destroyed. Mr. Riley's relatives claim that no one except the publisher of Riley's writings has the right to print publicly or on a private press any of these unpublished letters.

Three holograph letters of Charles Dickens have recently come into the possession of Mr. Wells. They are all addressed to Clarkson Stanfield, marine and landscape painter and a friend of Dickens. One, dated April 30, 1844, concerns a dinner on behalf of a sanitarium for students and artists in which Dickens was interested. Dickens says:

The dinner is to comprise the new feature of ladies dining at the tables with the gentlemen—not looking down upon them from the gallery. It will be very brilliant and cheerful.

A second letter, dated May 25, 1849, is signed "The Misconceived One." In part it reads:

No-no-no, Murder, murder! Madness and misconception. Any one of those subjects—not the whole. Oh, blessed star of early morning, what do you think that I am made of that I should on the part of any man prefer such a pig-headed, calf-eyed, donkey-eared master's request. Says my friend to me, "Will you ask your friend, Mr. Stanfield, what the damage of a little picture of that one would be, that I may treat myself with the same if I can afford it?" Says I: "I will." Says he, "Will you suggest that I should like it to be one of those subjects?" Says I, "I will." I am beating my head against the door with grief and frenzy and shall continue to do so until I receive your answer.

The third letter is dated January 9, 1844, and is signed "Philo Forecastle." It reads in part:

I was coming up to you today, but was detained abroad until dinner time, swearing affidavits against a gang of robbers, who have been pirating the "Carol," and against whom the most energetic vengeance of the inimitable B. is solemnly (and lawfully) directed. I think of going back to the Garrick, having received earnest invitations from the committee. What do you say? Umph. We expect every hour to have a Baby down here. If anything happens, while I am putting this in the envelope, I'll write the sex in large type outside.

Stan V. Henkels, of 1304 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, sold autograph letters and historical documents, on November 2, belonging to John R. Craigie and to Charles F. Gunther of Chicago. The Walpole Galleries, of New York, will sell on November 5 the library of the late Frederick D. Sherman, professor at Columbia University.