

40 Murray Rd. Wimbledon.

29 December 1923.

My dear North,

Many thanks for your good wishes for Christmas and 1924 and your kind gift of Arnold's Ventures in Book Collecting which I value the more because of its nice references to yourself, and the charming preface by Wise. Wise is really a deceiver, as he always professes he can neither write nor speak, and yet he does both on occasion, charmingly. My wife and I are both well, despite the most unpleasant assortment of mist weather which either of us can remember. For the last couple of months we have had a perpetual alternation of unusual cold, unusually high winds, and occasional days of comparative warmth & rain. My wife had a cold (caught from a too hot room) which developed into a slight attack of bronchitis early last month, but threw it off very well, and I hope greatly that she will now hold out till she starts for Alassio on Jan 31.

That pleasant place suits her extraordinarily well, as after about Jan. 20 most days can be reckoned on to be dry and sunny, & it is dryness & sun that restore her to life & activity. I was there for a fortnight at the end of last March & loved the place as much as ever. I suppose I shall be called on to go out again about the same time next year (it is still 1923 here), though I have so much that I want to do before I leave the B.M. next August it will be difficult to manage it. After August 14 I shall be what is called "a free man" and am wondering how I shall get any order into my freedom. I'm so used to regular habits I shall have to construct them anew which will be a little difficult. Otherwise I shan't be very sorry to cease Keeping Printed Books. It is extraordinarily interesting, but it is very hard work, & I am a little weary of writing endless Reports to the Trustees on all conceivable subjects. Also the Keeper's Room at the B.M. is unpleasantly dark & unpleasantly cold - so I shall have some cause for rejoicing when I quit. Meanwhile I'm keeping on steady pressure to get out (i) the huge Part of the XVth century catalogue comprising Venice (ii) a short little catalogue of French books

in the B.M. 1470-1600 (iii) - further Bibliographical Society & Short title catalogue of English books 1475-1640, and (a word I made for my own back (iv) a World List of Scientific Periodicals. The English Short title catalogue is just now most in my thoughts. Fortunately I've got my predecessor in the keepership, G. F. Barwick, to help me, and we really hope to make a start in printing it next month. I think it will have some 25000 entries. I am still at a loss for a helper in locating copies in your Eastern States. Cole will give all the help I need for the Huntington's books, but I want wherever copies exist in the States to mention one in the West and one in the East. And I have no victim yet forthcoming for the East. For England & Scotland we shall try to locate 3 copies where there are so many, and shall give references altogether to nearly a hundred libraries.

At home of an evening I do little, as a day's work at the B.M. + an extra hour on the Short title Cat. doesn't leave me much brains for writing. I keep on pegging away at what should be a quite small job for the Grolier Club, but I spent an hour or two looking up points that ultimately yield only a couple of sentences, & proper

4

is slow. I had a brief but pleasant excursion to Edinburgh two or three weeks ago, as I was elected President of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society & went there to give an inaugural address & stayed with W. B. Blair of Constables for whom I have a great affection. On the way up I stayed a night at Durham, which also was very pleasant.

We have had a very quiet Christmas here, my wife & I dining alone; but next week we expect our daughter Joyce, with the three year old Betty and the 7 months old Joan, & later on the eleven year old Bill, who is at present with his father staying with his other grandfather. Joyce's husband, who started as a temporary inspector under the Board of Agriculture has won golden opinions at the Board & has not only had his appointment made permanent but is likely I think to do very well there. He has been common sense, a good deal of tact, and a fund of humour which enables him to surmount all sorts of difficulties in dealing with County Councils & other strange bodies. We are fortunate in having an old servant come back too being a very aged but cheerful husband, so we have escaped the domestic difficulties which are rampant over here, & they enjoy having the young people as much as we do. Are you ever crossing over to this side again? You seem to get hold of a jolly stock of books, but I suppose that now there are so many

5
changing hands from time to time in New York
that there is not the same need to visit the country
of origin as there used to be: - it's more a
pity. I am afraid I am not likely to make a
trip westward myself, though for many reasons
I should like to do so, and not least for the pleasure
of seeing you & Mrs. Wort. All good wishes to
you both. ~~forget.~~ sincerely yours,

Arvo Pollard