

40 Murray D. Wimbledon.

26 December 1928. 1928

My dear North,

Many thanks for your latest Christmas present (I wish I knew your tastes well enough to send you something acceptable in return!); I think the Master Makers of the Book, though not so amusing as In Quest of the Perfect Book is the best thing Orcutt has yet done about printing. It has very few of the small errors which annoy one in his earlier books and he takes a liberal view of his subject & combines it with a lot of unbacked facts about well known people like Aldus, the Elzevirs and Plantin as to whom the same meagre accounts have appeared in one text book after another, with scarcely any addition, for the best part of half a century. So I reckon it as really a good book which I am glad to have; though I think your catalogue XCI beats it. Despite its small print I've read a lot of the one page apiece entries, & think them most admirably done. There have been lots of historical & critical ~~historical~~ books about the development of the Novel which have seldom had any great success, but I believe that your catalogues under your direction might make a best seller, by a book written just in this way and on just this scale ~~to~~ with some such title as "Famous Novels,

has they were written and the part they played in their authors lives". I think it should be a five dollar book in its first instance with illustrations of titlepage & portraits, & you could have a cheap edition afterwards. It seems to me throwing away money not to do it!

The Bibliographical Society has been creating along these ~~to~~ last two years not very satisfactorily. We increase our membership each year, also our bank-balance, but we haven't got out the books. I rather tired myself out over the Short Tith Catalogue and can't push things along as I used to do, especially as Plomer's last work (Dictionary ^{inquit} of Printed 1726-1775) shows signs of his failing health & getting it through the press has been a melancholy job which has worried me greatly. But we have two books almost ready for issue, one in German ornamental Borders 1515-1540 with 80 excellent Colotype plates, and another, ~~on the~~ giving the records of the Court of the Stationers Company ~~to~~ 1577-1603, which Archer was not allowed to print. Then there will be Plomer's Dictionary and McKerron & Fergusons book on Inquit Borders (to 1640) a grand volume, & finally I hope Greg's Bibliography of English Plays to 1640, which is not merely an ordinary full-dress bibliography, but almost ~~exactly~~ elaborate. So I hope that by this time next year the arrears will all have been made good & we shall

~~shall~~ have more members crowding in than
ever.

My portrait, for which you amiably suffered yourself
to be plundered, was handed over to the Librarian of the
Central Library for students for temporary exhibition &
subsequent housing on December 17th, and at the same
time a replica with less of my legs & less background
was presented to me, so if the Bib. Soc. & the Central
Library are ever housed in separate buildings then may be
one for each of them. I think the replica slightly the more
pleasant of the two, & that the photograph which you
will get, soon I hope, is very satisfactory. There were 50 or 60
people at the presentation & we had a very jolly tea after it.
Kenyon made a the tenderest possible speech, & I did my
best to rise to the occasion. I enjoyed having it painted, an
unusual experience I believe, but I lived Franka Brooks
who did it, & we walked a lot about the New
Forest together in the gorgeous weather we had in
May, blue skies, hot suns and slight easterly breezes
which made me look exceptionally healthy; when you
see the photograph please imagine me with a tanned
face, blue flannel suit, and purple tie! ~~Since~~ In the
Summer I was ~~at~~ at Stone Fleming in South Devon with
the same jolly party of friends as last year (including Greg)
for 3 weeks, and since then have paid flying visits to
Bath to see my daughter & to Street near Glastonbury
to stay with Laurence Housman & his sister. At
home I am rather oppressively quiet & shall be glad
when I have got through the outstanding jobs which

do not take me up to the British Museum
as often as would be good for me. At present
I find keeping my self cheerful takes up a good
deal of the energy which used to go into my work
& such jobs take a lot of time. But I suppose that
this is in part at least only the natural result of
approaching seventy & having outlived both my wife
and my boys. Probably it is all good discipline for
me, and thank be I have lots of friends, though
they are a widely scattered crowd, and there is only
one of my neighbours with whom (like wife) I am
really intimate. I hope that in 1929 I shall get
more to town, when I always run across
some one whom I am glad to see.

This is an unmercifully long letter, but I
have written it in the hope of extracting some
news of your own doings and Mrs. North's,
to whom please remember me very kindly

With the best of wishes for the New Year,

Ever yours sincerely,

A. W. Pallard
