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Autolycus' Pack and Other Light Wares
by
Arundell Esdaile.

Written in 1912, when we did not all yet, like the mediaeval poor, draw our information from pictures.

Many of these 16th-century catchpenny news-quartos bear title-pages of the most full-blooded and sensational kind, often so lengthy as to render the reading of the book quite unnecessary, even if one had any temptation to do so. They show plainly that the deviser of headlines and placards is not the son of later times, but an old and grey-headed disturber of the public peace.

Casaubon--or was it Scaliger?--married in order to get access to the lady's father's library.

His warmth is rather a drawback to reading him. He had in excess that terrible flux of words when writing of love or religion which marks in all times the half-breed.

The Revolutionary Bantry allowed the Marquis de Saint-Croix no name at all, there being pas plus de Marquis, plus de Saint, plus de Croix.

Johnson possessed the valuable power of "tearing the heart out of a book" without the labour of reading it through.

"La Britannique est plus imposante; mais la Bodleienne est plus intime." Garrick told Boswell that he gave Johnson free access to his collection of old plays. Probably Johnson wanted to take them home. Garrick once lent J. his Petrarch "stupendously bound". "But scarce had he taken it in his hands, when he poured forth a Greek ejaculation and a couplet or two from Horace, and then in one of those fits of enthusiasm which always seem to require that he should spread his arms aloft, he suddenly pounced my poor Petrarca over his head upon the floor. And there, standing for several minutes lost in abstraction, he forgot probably that he had ever seen it." Many of Garrick's early play quartos, now in the British Museum, look as if they had been "pounced" over someone's head and testify that their owner was no bibliophile.

We see Johnson through the eyes of younger people who surround a revered and adored elder---a kind of universal uncle.

Today there is a bibliography of every subject one can conceive. There are libraries of easy access. In our greatest library, when I first entered it, there was still a remnant of a moss-grown, dirty, and idle regiment of old persons, ironically termed "researchers". A book before them for form's sake, they spent most of the day, surrounded by a wealth of learning for which they had no mortal occasion, reading, as Mr Justice Stazleigh used to think, with their eyes shut. A kindly Government kept them warm and dry. To dovetail fancy into the interstices of fact.

Frederick Albert Pottle: The Literary Career of James Boswell, Esq. (1929)
Geoffrey Scott and F. A. Pottle: The Private Papers of J. B., Esq., 18 vols
The family, ashamed of its wayward member, was uncommunicative. The male line having died out, the ebony cabinet (an heirloom at Auchinleck) with its freight made its way through the female line to Malahide Castle in Ireland. In 1926 and later years the present Lord Talbot de Malahide was persuaded to sell them to Lt-Col. Ralph Isham. Boswell was the inventor of the interview, and as such he deserves a statue in Fleet Street far more than does Johnson; well his whole relations with J. were

Boswell: Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, ed. by F. A. Pottle & C. H. Bennett: Johnson, on being shown in Edinburgh by a barber, with a blunt razor, protested: "Sir, this is digging."

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