

INTRODUCTION

By B. MEREDITH LANGSTAFF

WHEN A MAN gradually finds himself collecting the works of a living author as they appear, he will become aware that the author has shouldered his way into considerable footage of library shelves. His bookish friends exclaim at the sight of his "marvelous collection." He becomes proud of the prominence of his possession and presses on to make it more interesting with manuscripts, magazine contributions, letters, and ephemera. Sometimes in a contemplative hour he will wonder what will become of the collection he has sought so eagerly to assemble. How did it start? How will it end?

Charles Macgregor Falconer (1844-1906) was a rope and twine manufacturer of Dundee on the Firth of Tay in Scotland. He was a "brisk-mannered, alert-eyed, crisply spoken man who looked and talked what he was—a shrewd man of business to whom ecstasies of aesthetic experience would be unknown." Yet his book collection showed his love of poetry and of the folklore and history of his native Scotland. From his library shelves beamed Barrie, Blake, Bridges, Burns, Crockett, Dobson, Gosse, Henley, Keats, Kipling, Lang, Le Gallienne, Locker-Lampson, Meredith, Morris, Rossetti, Ruskin, Scott, Shakespeare, Stevenson, Swinburne, Tennyson, Thackeray, Watson, Whitman, and others. But books of Andrew Lang gradually took pre-eminence. In 1889 Falconer wrote that he possessed sixty-

eight volumes of Lang and in 1898 four hundred and ninety-five titles. He found Lang a "fascinating writer" and one who was "in middle life so many-sided."

Then, too, the Kingdom of Fife is just south across the Tay, and there was St. Andrews, Lang's University and the town where he chiefly resided outside London. Falconer was able to call upon him and consult him. Lang was bound to be impressed by Falconer's enthusiasm and by his untiring pursuit of magazine articles and newspaper leaders. He helped Falconer from time to time—even, I am happy to remember, giving Falconer what seems now to be the only surviving copy of *The Black Thief*.

As a compliment to his favorite author, Falconer published in 1889 twenty-five copies of his *Specimens of a Bibliography* describing thirteen of Lang's works. Again, in 1894 he privately published another dainty volume, one hundred copies, describing eight volumes in bibliographical detail. Finally, in 1898 he had printed twenty-five copies of a description of his Lang library.

PR 4877
A1 F18
On December 18, 1906, Falconer died in Dundee. On December 11, 1907, his library was sold by order of his executors at Sotheby's in London and the largest single lot (number 180) was described as "a probably complete collection of the writings of Andrew Lang": "Books Entirely Written by Lang," "Works Written in Collaboration with Other Writers," "Works Edited by Lang," and "A Quantity of Various Magazines, Newspapers, Cuttings and Small Publications containing Original Contributions by Mr. Lang."

An American collector of the works of Andrew Lang bought the lot and removed them to vastly augment his own Lang collection in his house in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The result of Falconer's tireless enthusiasm had found a safe and loving home.

Frank Graef Darlington (1859-1918) was born in Old Chester, Pennsylvania, received his degree in civil engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1881, and became the Engineer of Maintenance and Way of the Pennsylvania Railroad at Zanesville, Ohio. In 1883 he married Elise Buckingham and soon thereafter became Superintendent of the Indianapolis Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad. During this period Darlington became an avid book collector in a wide field, from the authors of fourteenth century Europe to nineteenth century Indiana. "Father literally worshipped the printed page," his son told me last May.

Unfortunately, in 1896, an attack of paralysis deprived Darlington of his speech. Forced to abandon railroad work, he educated one lobe of his brain to do the work of two, and undertook the study of medicine, his real ambition in life, with just a slight speech impediment (evident only to his intimates) to remind him of his ordeal. He entered Indiana College of Medicine, now part of the Indiana University School of Medicine, and was within a few months of graduation when forced to give up because of his health. He died thirteen years later, at the age of fifty-eight, unable to curb his boundless energy to a pace that his health would safely permit.

His increased passion for book collecting helped to buoy his spirits in spite of the necessity of curbing his still unsated ambition. He lined his study, a room fifty by thirty by twenty feet high, with bookshelves to the highest point under the gable on the top floor of his residence. His Andrew Lang collection—finally augmented by the Falconer pur-

chase—crowned his general library of several thousand volumes.

The owner of that fine library was succeeded by his son; but the younger Frank Graef Darlington's hobbies and avocation were far wide of book collecting and the amassing of choice volumes of Andrew Lang, James Whitcomb Riley, (a close and treasured companion and friend of his father), and Bibles as far back as the Fourteenth Century. Mr. Darlington's only "collection" is seventy-seven Maine harbors, and he finds little time for other things beside his trusteeships and family affairs. He presented the unique Falconer Collection of Andrew Lang (514 volumes), augmented by the further collection of his father, to the Indiana State Library in October, 1954. The Librarian, Mr. Harold F. Brigham, was elated by the acquisition of the Langs, the Whitcomb Rileys, and all the other treasures.

In January, 1957, I heard from a bookseller friend in Kentucky that "the whole Falconer Collection is now in Indiana!" Immediately I flew to Indianapolis and for two whole days pored over the Lang treasures, which were stored in a large, locked interior room in the State Library. It seemed to me a pity that these fascinating volumes should not be more readily available to the world of scholarship. So too it seemed to the Hon. John Brademas, Representative in Congress from the state of Indiana, third district, with whom I felt affiliation through Harvard and who in turn was interested in Lang, a Fellow of Merton, because Brademas too was an Oxford man. He was also an appropriate champion since he was a member of the Congressional Committee on Education. I talked it over with Mr. Darlington, who became enthusiastic about the

transfer of the Lang Collection from the Indiana State Library to the Lilly Library at Indiana University.

With the eager cooperation of Mr. Brademas, Robert R. McClarren, Director of the Indiana State Library, Governor Matthew E. Welsh, Chancellor Herman B Wells, Cecil K. Byrd of Indiana University, and Lang's biographer Roger Lancelyn Green, Mr. Darlington was able to effect the transfer in April, 1964, which I had suggested to him in 1963.

B. MEREDITH LANGSTAFF *is a collector of Andrew Lang and an attorney-at-law in New York City.*