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Sir Shane Leslie and Other Irish Bibliographers

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SHANE LESLIE AND OTHER IRISH BIBLIOGRAPHERS

I understand that you are not interested in the minutiae of Sir Shane Leslie, or any other Irish bibliographer for that matter. What I hope will be of interest are some observations on the collecting of Irish bibliographical works, using Shane Leslie and some others as our text.

I realized that I had become a collector of Irish bibliographical studies about 30 years ago, when I purchased a copy of the Anderson Galleries auction catalogue of the John Quinn Library. Before that time I was a modern firsts collector, concentrating on acquiring the works of four or five contemporary Irish novelists. Like many modern firsts enthusiasts I was [and continue to be] a completist: attempting to acquire all books, translations, and periodical appearances by or about my chosen authors. But 30 years ago, I was simply purchasing the Irish equivalent of “books about books”, and bibliographies of 20th century Irish writers [one of those bibliographies was penned by John Slocum of Newport, who spoke to the Bartlett Society a few years ago at a memorable session at the Redwood Library. His Joyce bibliography is still the standard].

[Overhead] title page: The library of John Quinn, part one...NY, 1923.

I can't recall how much I paid for the five volume annotated work, but I am sure that it was more than I could afford. But when I purchased it, I knew that I was now a collector of Irish bibliographies, even though I did not at that time know how I would refine, limit, or develop the collection. From then on, I have tried to purchase, when the price was right, the printed catalogues of Irish collections. The Quinn catalogue marks one of the outer limits of my Irish collection. Mathew Bruccoli, in his biography of Mitchell Kennerley, the President of the Anderson Galleries, says, “The sale of John Quinn's library at the Anderson remains the greatest auction of modern literature. The 12,108 lots were sold in thirty-two sessions between November 1923 and March 1924. Quinn collected modern authors in depth at a time when other collectors concentrated on “high spots” of early literature. Because of his friendship with--and patronage of—contemporary writers he was able to acquire rich manuscript holdings for Conrad, and for Joyce, Synge, Yeats and other figures of the Irish Renaissance. The five volume catalogue was the most readable ever produced by the Anderson,

and is still used for bibliographical reference... The New York Herald stated that the headnotes [many of which were written by Quinn] brought the Quinn catalogues within the boundaries of literature.” The Conrad mss. alone realized nearly one-half of the total take, a disappointing \$226,000. What proved to be the most memorable item in the sale, Joyce’s ms of *Ulysses* was sold for a mere \$1,975 to Dr. Rosenbach. He tried to sell the ms for \$3,000 but was unable to effect a sale. *Ulysses* still resides in the Rosenbach Library. In 2001, the National Library of Ireland paid \$1.2 million for a manuscript draft of a single episode of *Ulysses*. I then went about trying to acquire all books about John Quinn. Quinn was a remarkable man, a man of many accomplishments that his life intercepts many areas of my own interest: from book collecting, to Irish literature and art, to Irish-American affairs. Aline Saarinen, devotes a chapter in her book, *The Proud Possessors*, to John Quinn who had also acquired the foremost collection of modern art in America. Indeed, one of the reasons for disposing of his books and manuscripts was to devote more space, time, and energy to developing his interest in modern art. However, he died shortly after the sale in 1924, leaving an art collection of over 2,500 pieces [including over 60 Picassos] and what remained of his literary collection to be sold by his estate.

[Overhead] title page—Autographed Letters of Celebrated Authors...NY, 1927.

I have added a catalog of the literary manuscripts sold at the American Art Association gallery in 1927, and a 1926 memorial exhibition catalog of a portion of his art collection to my Quinn material. Quinn also maintained an extensive personal correspondence with many of the greats of the Modern Movement, including Pound, T.S. Eliot, Joyce and Yeats. He retained carbon copies which were gathered into 13 volumes and donated to the New York Public Library. From this extensive archive a full biography was written [B. L. Reid’s Pulitzer prize winning *The Man from New York*], a monograph published by the Smithsonian on his art collecting, and more recently, a series of volumes have been published which gather together the correspondence between Quinn and Yeats, Pound, May Morris, Maud Gonne and others. Quinn continues to fascinate, and my Quinn collection continues to grow. The latest addition is a biography of his last mistress, Jeanne Robert Foster that was just published, and a collection of biographical essays on the Irish writers included in the Quinn Collection.

Gradually, I acquired other catalogues of some of the great Irish collections: the 1930 Bigger Catalogue formed by the preeminent bibliographer/collector F.J. Bigger and donated to the Belfast Public Library; the Bradshaw Catalogue [I have a reprint edition of this 3 volume work] of the Irish collection formed by Henry Bradshaw, a 19th century librarian of Cambridge University Library. Shane Leslie, in an essay on Bradshaw, published in a festschrift for Doctor Rosenbach says of Bradshaw, “For him there was no perfection to be obtained in books so he left none behind but he inspired every book of value on his own subjects for a generation.” Bradshaw is considered by many to be the father of modern bibliography. I have a biography and a couple of selections of his writings posthumously published to round out my Bradshaws. I also have a volume which was originally in the Bradshaw Irish Collection: a deaccessioned copy of a collection of catalogues of second hand books offered for sale by a Dublin bookseller of the 1860s, John O’Daly. I have an extensive collection of dealer’s catalogues from all of the Irish specialists, because I’ve been collecting in this area for over thirty years, but I also purchase catalogues, which were issued earlier than when my interests began. I was delighted to find the Bradshaw provenance for the O’Daly catalogues.

[Overhead] title page—Catalogue of the Books and Manuscripts...compiled by Douglas Hyde and D.J. O’Donoghue, Dublin, 1918.

I recently acquired another catalogue: the Gilbert catalogue of the Irish collection formed by the 19th century pioneer Dublin historian, John T. Gilbert, now in the Dublin Municipal Library. It is not only one of the great Irish collections, but the compilers are significant figures in their own right: Douglas Hyde, the founder of the Gaelic League, and the first President of Ireland, and D. J. O’Donoghue, the Librarian of UCD, and a pioneer in Irish bibliographical studies. An extensive collection of O’Donoghue’s correspondence with many Irish poets and literary figures was included in the supplementary sale of the Quinn collection.

One other avenue I have pursued [finally, before we reach Sir Shane] with diligence and delight is an attempt to complete a collection of periodicals devoted to Irish bibliography. This compliments my collection of Irish little magazines. The earliest title is the *Irish Literary Inquirer* [four issues written and published by John Power in 1865-66 with contributions by Henry Bradshaw], which is quite rare. I don’t own any issues, but have read it on microfiche at URI. Its successor, the *Irish Book Lover* had a long and

distinguished life in London and eventually in Dublin from 1909 to 1957. The originator, J. S. Crone, an Irishman living in London, a medical man and coroner, opened up the pages to a “notes and queries” type of approach to assist all of the bibliographers of the time: F. J. Bigger, E.R. McClintock Dix, Fr. Stephen Brown, O’Donoghue, and Shane Leslie. It is very difficult to acquire a complete run of this periodical, as it was both limited in distribution and fragile in format. In its final years it was published and edited by Colm O’Lochlainn, At the Sign of the Three Candles. At its demise, and through the mid-60s, Liam Miller of the Dolmen Press published the *Irish Book*, followed by *Irish Booklore* in the early 70s [out of the Blackstaff Press in Belfast], which was continued by the *Linen Hall Review* into the mid-90s. Finally, *The Long Room*, an annual volume sponsored by the Friends of Trinity Library, has been published continually since 1970 and is always of interest.

As with John Quinn, it was my habit to also pursue the non-bibliographical titles by the chief Irish bibliographers. For example, Fr. Stephen Brown authored *Ireland in Fiction*, a bibliography that attempted to survey all fiction with Irish characters or an Irish setting. A teacher, he became the Librarian of the Catholic Central Library in Dublin, and in that capacity authored a number of interesting bibliographical guides. But I have also purchased his literary and theological writings as well.

Shane Leslie

[Overhead] title page, *The Script of Jonathan Swift and Other Essays*, London, 1935..

My interest in Shane Leslie began with the purchase of *The Script of Jonathan Swift and Other Essays* in the series: the Rosenbach Fellowship in Bibliography. It seemed to have some authority behind it and was subsidized by the great scholar/dealer, the same Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach. This volume contains a lecture on Swift’s handwriting [Leslie also contributed an essay on the Swift manuscripts in the Morgan Library to a festschrift for the Morgan’s first librarian Belle daCosta Greene], an essay entitled “The Rarest Irish Books”, and a piece on St. Patrick’s Purgatory [mere filler to get the volume up to a minimum respectable length]. His essay on the rarest Irish books was a good survey of important, primarily, continental books in Irish history. More on that anon. But first, who was Sir Shane Leslie? Shane Leslie made it his life’s work to meet and to know everybody who mattered.

He had a leg up in this regard being born into a prominent and wealthy family: minor members of Debrett's peerage. His parents were wealthy hobnobbers with Dukes, princesses, and lady whatnots: the generally idle class associated with the highest diplomatic circles. His mother, Leonie, was one of the triumvirate of beautiful daughters of the American financier, Leonard Jerome. Her sister Jennie was the famous Lady Randolph Churchill, the mother of Winston. The Lesliees were typical Anglo-Irish absentee landlords, visiting Ireland only for the shooting season. The Lesliees were from Glaslough County Monaghan, with extensive landholdings, including the ancient site of pilgrimage, Lough Derg, or St. Patrick's Purgatory in County Donegal. While no longer rabidly Protestant, they remained committed to the Ascendancy, staunchly Unionist and sufficiently class-bound to, naturally, believe that Catholics and Nationalists should be avoided and opposed at all cost: fully Tory in outlook. Shane [christened John Randolph—the middle name for his godfather Lord Randolph Churchill] born in 1885 was the eldest of four sons. Educated first at Eton, then a year's stay in Paris at the Sorbonne, where he also took the opportunity to sit at the feet of Henry Adams, and then on to King's College Cambridge. While at King's he succumbed to two contemporary and somewhat conflicting forces: one in its full flood, the Irish Revival [in language, literature, and politics], and one at its last gasp: the Oxford Movement. By 1908, this son of privilege and order, had changed his name to Shane and had converted to Catholicism [of the Roman variety]. His first separate publication, an 8-page pamphlet entitled *The Landlords of Ireland* and his *Songs of Oriel*, his first book of Celtic twilight poetry would have embarrassed the family no end. He even made gestures toward joining the priesthood, living in a settlement house [but not on the weekends] in London's East End slums, and running for Parliament as an Irish Nationalist against old friends of the family. All of this led to the family going to the expense of disinheriting him in favor of his soldier brother Norman. Norman, however died in the first month of WWI, by which time Shane had given up his only temporary interest in celibacy, and had produced an heir of his own [Shane had sufficiently changed his tune by naming his son John, not Shane]. In point of fact, Shane succeeded to the baronetcy at his father's death in 1944.

Leslie led the life of a "man of letters" when it was still possible to use this term without offense. He is listed with the Historians and Autobiographers in my favorite bibliography, one I have found that for the past 25 years I consult with on at least a monthly basis: *The New Cambridge Bibliography*

of English Literature, volume 4, 1900 to 1950. After Cambridge he traveled extensively, loaded for bear with introductions and entrees into the homes of the elect [he actually visited Tolstoy in Russia], and made his way to the States where he found an American wife, dined at the White House, and met all of the rich and famous, both within and without the Irish-American community. During his first trip to the States he met and annoyed John Quinn. But at a later date he petitioned Quinn to assist in getting a permanent burial spot for Baron Corvo. It was an article by Leslie in the *London Mercury* which inspired A.J.A. Symons' *The Quest for Corvo*—a book which I can unreservedly recommend to you all—at least the first ¾ of it. A brilliant book about the researching and the writing of biography. It is dedicated to Leslie.

During his first trip to America he followed what would be his typical itinerary, living in the mansions of Cardinals and Bishops, supping at the table of the rich and elect, and earning pocket change or greater sums by speaking to groups attracted to the various public circuits for Irish nationalism and the Gaelic League, or to more distinguished groups, with gossipy chatter on the nobility of England. Sort of a Henny Youngman for the boiled potato circuit. This type is common, and Irish Americans have been plagued by these witty minstrels who sing for their supper, gather their speaking fees and return to Ireland in comfort while continuing to speak ill of us. Oscar Wilde was a great success on the lecture circuit early in his career as was Yeats, James Stephens and the other literary anecdoters who still turn up every St. Patrick's Day. Leslie was assisted in securing speaking engagements by both Rosenbach and Quinn, not to mention the entire Irish-American Catholic hierarchy. So he lived his life as a raconteur, a journalist and a bon-vivante.

A friend, when told I was preparing a talk on Shane Leslie called him a “schnorer”. Perhaps I should apologize in advance by repeating this Yiddish word. I've found that when he uses such words, they usually have a direct reference to some bodily part or function not normally spoken of in polite society. But he explained that a “schnorer” is the uninvited guest, one at every party or function. Sir Shane was not a “schnorer”. Apparently, he was the welcome guest in many a drawing room, dining room, and boudoir, in French, English, Irish and American society. In fact, he went to great pains to meet with those he thought to be the intellectual leaders of his day [I have already mentioned his seeking out both Tolstoy and Henry Adams].

Leslie's Writing Career

Leslie is primarily a journalist, yet he tackled many different literary genres, writing more than 50 books himself, and editing that many more. So he left a substantial body of work for us to consider, which can be grouped under four headings:

- 1) journalism
- 2) novels and poetry
- 3) memoirs and autobiographies
- 4) biographies

Portions of his writings in all of these categories deal with Ireland and to a lesser extent, Irish bibliography.

JOURNALISM

In Sept. 1922 he had the occasion to review James Joyce's *Ulysses* for the *Dublin Review*, where he was the editor. By this time, seven months after publication in Paris, *Ulysses* had already created quite a stir. *Dublin Review* is not an Irish journal [although one of its founders back in the 1830s was Daniel O'Connell who wanted a voice of support in England for Catholic emancipation], but was published in Leslie's time to serve the Roman Catholic church in England. So Leslie writes: "The official Inquisition has always distinguished between what is filthy and what is blasphemous, according different warnings and condemnations as the faithful are liable to be affected by either. With the mass of underground Priapic literature the Holy Church has not let the hem of her vesture be soiled, but to those who have reason to read the whole of the Classics or to study the bypaths of ethnology or psychology she has lifted no prohibitive finger. She is a lady, not a prude. Her inquisitions, her safeguards and indexes all aim at the avoidance of the scriptural millstone, which is so richly deserved by those who offend one of her little ones. But to those who can take care of themselves she leaves her guarded permission, and she never forgets the simple truth of better human nature that *puris omnia pura*. The converse, that to some minds nothing remains pure or sacred is shown in this lamentable work of which we trust no copy will ever be added to the National Library of Ireland... Having tasted and rejected the devilish drench, we most earnestly hope that this book be not only placed on the Index Expurgatorius, but that its reading and communication be made a reserved case." Here we see Leslie whipping up the forces of the Church against Joyce: if not the full Inquisition, at least the Index. Yet Leslie himself was a

fellow traveler in that Priapic underground, writing introductions and translating those Pierre Louys-like titles so often republished with titillating illustrations in the 1920s and 30s. These were the staples of the “curiosa” trade. Four years later, with the publication of Leslie’s novel *The Cantab*, the Bishop of Nottingham raised questions about the propriety of certain passages, including a seduction scene whereby a recent Eton graduate is seduced by a local servant girl who is no better than she should be. Leslie quickly withdrew the edition, rewrote the offending passages and issued a second edition with a groveling introduction, but it was too late. He was sacked as editor, and hoist on his own petard. The expurgated edition of *The Cantab*, is the rarer and more difficult to obtain.

The less said about Shane’s verse the better: but it should be noted that his first book, *Songs of Oriel* was published by Maunsel and a later volume was published At the Sign of the Three Candles, two publishers who should be represented in every Irish collection.

Memoirs and Autobiographies.

Leslie’s best books by far are those where he is writing about himself. He wrote three extensive autobiographies, all still worth reading: *American Wonderland*, recounting four of his extensive residencies in the states, *Film of Memory*, and his last work *Long Shadows* published in his 81st year. In addition, many of his biographical works are simply disguised memoirs of friends and family. This interest in oneself and ones family seems to be a Leslie family trait. Jonathan Swift has said:

“Glaslough with rows of books upon the shelves
Written by Leslies all about themselves.”

Shane’s brother Seymour wrote a wonderful book entitled *The Jerome Connection* [an evocative term for a family who lived on their connections]: his brother Lionel found himself discharged from the Army in India, and decided to walk home via Tibet. He wrote a number of engaging trekking works. Shane’s daughter Anita continued the trend with books about herself, her great-uncle Moreton Frewin, and Morton’s wonderfully adventurous daughter Clare Sheridan [who by the way, wrote extensively herself, about herself]; Shane also wrote about his uncle Moreton, who was referred to by all as ‘mortal ruin’ for his tendency to lose the fortunes of his friends; and Shane’s son Desmond, breaking with the trend, wrote many popular works, including a best-seller on flying saucers. I can go on: Desmond’s wife Agnes

Bernelle, an actress and cabaret performer, wrote her own memoirs and also edited a festschrift for her second husband, Maurice Craig, the great authority on Irish bookbindings. Many Britishers fondly remember Desmond for punching out, on national TV, a critic who spoke unkindly about a performance by Agnes in some cabaret. There are other more extensive literary connections on other sides of the family as well. This all without even the mention of Shane's first cousin, Winston Churchill, who continued the trend for his and Shane's generation with his biography of his father, Randolph.

Bibliographical Writings

Leslie's bibliographical output is small but of the age. He wrote a number of articles on some of the great private libraries in Ireland for *The Book Collector's Quarterly* [edited by A.J.A. Symons], contributed notes, as already mentioned, to the *Irish Book Lover*, and provided entree for Dr. Rosenbach [indeed, he acted as Rosenbach's agent on a number of occasions] to those self-same libraries. The essay "The Rarest Irish Books", while essentially a party piece, is also typical of the work that had to be done by the bibliographers of his day [that is, the first quarter of the 20th century]. Leslie actually did the research for this article in the 1920s long before publication here. One must remember that The Bibliographical Society during this same time period was devoting most of its efforts towards sponsoring and completing the work of Pollard and Redgrave on the *Short Title Catalogue*, which was finally published in 1926. While some of the titles considered by Leslie would be outside the purview of Pollard and Redgrave [if actually published outside the British Isles in Latin or Irish] the work of the enumerative bibliographer was an essential foundation for all future bibliographical work. Because he was only interested in the "rarest" Irish books, he also had to do the tedious census work so necessary to establish actual rarity. Leslie has an easy familiarity with the contents of the greatest Irish collections and makes some interesting observations on the holdings of the Bradshaw Collection at his alma mater, the Grenville Collection at The British Museum, the Shirley Library at Lough Fea and the National Library in Dublin. His observations on the Shirley Library in this essay, as well as the essay he wrote for *The Book Collector's Quarterly* raise troublesome issues about his journalistic accuracy.

Rosenbach and Leslie

We can focus on some of the troubling issues by observing his association with Dr. Rosenbach, the most prominent bookseller of the first half of the 20th century. Fleming and Wolf in their biography of Rosenbach tell part of the tale, but Leslie Morris in a 1989 essay/catalogue published by the Rosenbach Library entitled *Rosenbach Redux* gives a full account of the Leslie/Rosenbach association [based on the Rosenbach archives and the Leslie Collection at Georgetown]. “It is not known how, or precisely when, the two men became acquainted...but their business association—and friendship—began with their trip to Ireland following the Alice sale in 1928. Here Leslie’s role is clear. He introduced Rosenbach to several of his Irish neighbors, at their request, so that the rich American could help out the financially embarrassed landed gentry by buying books which had no interest for them.” On this trip, Leslie first brought him to the Clandeboye estate of the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava and the fabulously romantic library “Helen’s Tower”. Harold Nicolson, who has very much in common with Leslie, wrote a wonderful memoir on Helen’s Tower. This library contained many Victorian rarities, including unique Tennyson and Kipling items. She quotes Leslie: “I gave [Rosenbach] several opportunities to help friends of mine out of financial difficulties. One gave us cause for unending amusement. A noble Lord, through no fault of his own was in desperate need of ready cash and reminded me that I had once admired his father’s books—Would I bring Dr. Rosenbach for a week end! We provided a car and went without leaving our address in town. Our host we found alone in the house save for a butler from whom he said he must conceal the object of our visit. After dinner we ransacked the library and the Doctor picked out about two score books which I felt would hardly cover the sum needed. Then [the Doctor] withdrew asking me to value each book and adding significantly: ‘Remember, of course, he is a friend of yours.’ I valued them as high as I dared and handed him the list. The Doctor added a cipher to some of them and wrote a big covering cheque! The noble Lord then confessed that his trustees would not approve of the transaction, that they were heirlooms and he would like to be in a position to say that he had not actually handed them out of the library. He asked me to burgle them that night! Fortunately there was no armed watchman. In the darkness I collected each book with a torch and filled an old military sack which my host had produced. Then I hid the lot in a hollow oak in the park. I assured the doctor all would be well and so it turned out, for to his amazement we stopped the car the next day at the old oak and I recovered the books which we transferred to his suitcases.” Rosenbach paid about \$2500 for the 31 items. He quickly sold 4 of these to a

Kipling collector for \$12,000, making a 400% profit already, with 27 items remaining in stock. It appears that Leslie received a 15% finders fee.

The next day, Shane and Dr. R. visited Caledon where was housed the Bishop Percy Library of Percy's Reliques fame. Here Dr. R purchased 8 items including a Shakespeare first folio, and the Sonnets for 6000 pounds. Percy's own fully annotated copy of the *Reliques* still resides in the Rosenbach Library. Dr. R. quickly turned over the Shakespeares to Folger for a handsome profit. What's interesting however is that Leslie, in his 1932 article on the Percy Library for *The Book Collector's Quarterly* says: "It was on the occasion of their return [the library had been shipped to Belfast during the Irish troubles, before the border issue was settled] that I first caught an inkling of the literary treasures which the old bishop had brought to Ireland. To see a First Folio of Shakespeare, with the famous date gilded on the back, through a glass case is always exciting, but to see one piled with other books on the floor maketh the heart to beat. The Percy First Folio does not appear in the census of first editions of Shakespeare. It can never be called anything else but the Percy copy, for the old Bishop never hesitated to use his pen to scribble emendations in the margins, which were mistaken by an Irish cataloguer for the script of the Bard himself." It is curious indeed, that Leslie does not mention that he was present when the Percy copy flew the coop with Dr. R. But, at least in this case, the trustees had approved of the sale of these heirlooms.

Similarly, in "The Rarest Irish Books" Leslie says, "Any Irish bibliography must be based on the Shirley and Bradshaw Catalogues. They were often rivals in the field, and when they died no supreme collector of Irish rarities appeared. The bibliography of Irish books is still an unchartered sea. The number extent of the greater rarities is seldom known, and the history of authors who wrote about Ireland abroad in Latin is necessarily obscure." Neither in this essay nor in his article on the Shirley Library for *Book Collector's Quarterly* in 1932, does Leslie tell us that, for the most part, the Shirley Library had been broken up in the 1920s. It is only in the last footnote, where Leslie prints a verbatim response to his article by the Librarian of the National Library of Ireland where the librarian questions "Is it correct to speak of the Shirley Library as surviving? It has been dispersed, that is the most valuable part." Leslie's inexplicable discreteness may well be a reluctance to embarrass a friend in financial straights.

Leslie's Irish Writings

Anita Leslie, who wrote her father's entry for the *Dictionary of National Biography*, says "During 1916 and 1917 Leslie worked in Washington with the British ambassador, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, who was trying to soften Irish-American hostility to Britain and convince the United States of the urgency of declaring war against Germany [John Quinn worked closely with Leslie in this effort as well]. Leslie published a magazine entitled *Ireland* and strove with Spring-Rice to establish understanding between Westminster and Washington. Perhaps the bravest thing that Leslie ever did was to implore the British politicians not to execute the leaders of the 1916 Easter rising in Dublin. His arguments went unheeded. Sixteen outstanding Irishmen were shot, rendering friendship between the two peoples more difficult than ever. After the war, and indeed to the end of his life, Leslie tried to build bridges of friendship across the Irish religious divides." The book that established his reputation was *The End of a Chapter*, published by Scribner in April 1916 and reprinted many times immediately thereafter. It remains an evocative look at the wide-ranging social impact of WWI. Like much of Leslie it is more memoir than history, and what interests me here, from a bibliographical point of view, did Leslie take the opportunity to correct or update the work during its reprintings to take account of the Easter Rising of April 1916 [the same month and year of its first American appearance]. I have carefully read a number of the editions and printings, and found that while there are some differences between the American and English editions, Leslie let the sections on Ireland stand. He ends with a hopeful statement that the suspended home rule measure would be implemented at war's end. It seems at this time he was reluctant to speak of the Easter rebellion. The American editor did make some minor changes [of particular note is the removal of a reference to the number of Eton graduates who had died in the Boer War in the American and later edition—such minor death rates had already been vastly surpassed by this time on the Western front]. In all, *The End of a Chapter* provides a view of the plucky British up against the destroyers of civilization. Continuing the propaganda work, Shane published in February 1917 *The Celt and the World: A Study of the Relation of Celt and Teuton in History* by Scribners in New York [there never was an English edition], and later in the same year *The Irish Issue in its American Aspect: A Contribution to the Settlement of Anglo-American Relations During and After the Great War*, also published in New York after the entry of the US into the war. Both of these titles were written for an American audience, an Irish-American audience, emphasizing the intimate

and friendly connections between Americans and the British. Only the British could think that Leslie's writings would be of any propaganda value to them, though his skill as a raconteur and dinner companion may have done some good in this camp. His attempt to distinguish racial characteristics of the Irish and Germans, so that the British would be less Teuton and more Celt is baffling. One does not, apparently, have to make sense when writing propaganda. After the Second World War, in 1946 he wrote the *Irish Tangle for English Readers* [which he lovingly and elegantly dedicates to Francis Joseph Bigger, previously mentioned] attempting to mediate the British animosity resulting from Irish neutrality during the war. In all of these attempts, his perspective, in spite of his conversion and his early nationalist roots, is so upper-crust and Anglo-Irish that his only audience remains the ruling classes of Britain.

New Directions

Shane Leslie's work on Jonathan Swift's manuscripts reflects that emphasis within the field of bibliography during his lifetime, whereby establishing the correct text of literary giants such as Swift was of singular importance. The bibliographical milieu of the 21st century has shifted its emphases somewhat, and perhaps it could be said to be more inclusive. The leading practitioners of today, while still found in the English Departments, are less interested in the literary side of things, seemingly having abandoned the canon entirely. One encounters more the new terminology encompassed by the term "History of the Book" reflecting that difference in contemporary concerns. One of the most distinguished practitioners of that new emphasis, D. F. McKenzie, titled his 1985 Panizzi lectures *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*. The use of the terms 'history' and 'sociology' [particularly 'sociology'] is telling. These new bibliographers are producing studies that go far beyond an interest in literary texts. There is a growing interest in popular culture, and more interest in 'sociology' than ever before. One of those new interests, included within the 'History of the Book' is the study of reading. Placing less emphasis on who wrote what, and more on whom read what, and what choices did those readers have, and what were the readers' expectations? These questions are being studied in the Irish context as well. There is even an effort underway for a 'History of the Irish Book'. I have always found excuses to add interesting printing items, or examples of fine printing, and illustration. I have resisted 'high spot' collecting here, but I do want my collection to include representative samples reflecting all of the 'history of the book'. This newer direction actually informs my existing

collection. For example I have renewed interest in my Leslie collection because of new studies recently published.

In conclusion, I would like to mention two recent publications, which may be of interest to all of you, and show how they have informed my collection. The first book I'd like to look at is *The Key to Serendipity* by Ian Jackson, a West Coast bookseller. This book purports to be a manual on how to locate books in Peter Howard's Berkeley bookshop. In pure mock-epic style, with two pages of footnotes for each two sentences in the text, Jackson gives us a roller coaster ride of observations on book collecting, book selling and the bibliophilic world in its entirety. It is laugh-out-loud funny, and I recommend it to you wholeheartedly. However, it is his outrageous observation on condition, that I would like to focus on here: "In the West, the extremes of condition fetishism are found among the more secular societies and free-thinking classes. The extremes of indifference to condition [not merely in modern first editions, but in all books] are found in the Roman Catholic centers—Quebec, Dublin, Rome". Later when discussing property stamps, Jackson writes: "The stamps [not unattractive when old] are the inevitable result of the fact that a substantial portion of the antiquarian and scholarly stock of a bookseller in any Roman Catholic country will have been at some time in a seminary or monastic library...Fortunately [as in Dublin also] the book markets in these Roman Catholic cities look inward and are self contained." Now, the truth of these scurrilous remarks must remain unchallenged, at least as far as Dublin and Ireland is concerned. Condition is rarely even mentioned in the catalogues of Irish antiquarian and second-hand booksellers, and when it is, one should ignore it. Yet, I feel strangely liberated because of these remarks, and my tattered collections have gained, in my eyes, a new resonance, an increased desirability formerly lacking.

[Overhead] title page, *The Passing Chapter*, London, 1934. In center of page is four line quote:

"The weight of this sad time we must obey,
Speak what we feel and what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young
Shall never see so much nor live so long"

Shakespeare (Finale of King Lear).

In an unknown hand, in pencil, on second line the word 'and' has been lined through, and at end of line neatly written the correction 'not' added.

To the right of the publishers logo is the oval ink [blue] stamp: “St. Ignatius 85, Lower Leeson Street”, surrounding the initials “I H S”.

Let’s look at the title page from my copy of Shane Leslie’s *The Passing Chapter*. I purchased this copy for IR7.50 [about \$10] from the Dublin booksellers, Greenes, in 1996. The stamp, in blue ink, identifies its provenance from a Jesuit establishment in Leeson Street, a main Dublin thoroughfare providing direct access to the city centre. This correction made to the quotation from *King Lear*, may well have been made by a Jesuit with a simple interest in accuracy. There are other notes in this copy as well, all in pencil, neatly indexed with page numbers on the front free end paper.

Before pursuing this further, I would like to mention the final bibliographical text to be cited this evening. By yet another Jackson, this by H.J. Jackson, a University of Toronto English professor. The title of her book, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* [Yale, 2001] looks at the historical practice of writing in books, whether by the famous or the common reader, and looks to make some general observations of what it tells us about the act of reading. This Jesuit’s practice is of a type described by Prof. Jackson, and improves my capacity for sympathy for this type of book, which will no longer be marginalized in my Irish collections. An earlier term for marginalia was “adversaria”. It could be said that this Jesuit had an adversarial relationship to this book, at least this copy of this book. What does this Jesuitical correction tell us about the publishing of its time? Leslie is considered a classical scholar [he edited and translated Plato’s Symposium], a man of letters, an authority on a number of subjects. The publisher is impressed by Leslie’s credentials, and fails to ensure that Leslie accurately quotes Shakespeare. I should say that the American publisher also fails to correct this mistake. Now this is not a minor mistake: Leslie actually reverses the meaning of Shakespeare’s words! I have had this copy for six or seven years, and never even noticed the correction. I read Jackson’s *Marginalia* and Jackson’s *Key to Serendipity* early last Fall, and found a new awareness for the condition of some of my books and more sympathy for those books with marginalia such as this. We decry the lack of editorial enhancement by present day publishers, yet Cassell, a distinguished British publisher allows a major gaffe on the title page! I have yet to work out what it says about our reader. But it certainly says something about the accuracy of Sir Shane Leslie.

One final comment. I mentioned that Leslie dedicated his *Irish Tangle for English Readers* to Francis Joseph Bigger, the Belfast bibliographer. There was another famous Bigger from Belfast, Joe Biggar, a prominent 19th century Nationalist. The Biggers are not related. They do not spell their names the same. One is B-I-G-G-A-R [Joe, the Nationalist], and one is B-I-G-G-E-R [FJ, the bibliographer]. Sir Shane Leslie, here spells Bigger's name incorrectly, on the dedication page of the book, no less. Do not look for accuracy from Shane Leslie. You must settle, as I have, for entertainment instead.

WTO'M 21 March 2002