

Old Books in the Old World: Reminiscences of Book Buying Abroad

Leona Rostenberg, Madeleine B. Stern
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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Old Books in the Old World: Reminiscences of Book Buying Abroad:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. fresh insight into what Lord Clarke meant by "civilization" By a common reader Two intrepid and brilliant women offer us excerpts from their diaries and letters, written during the years 1947-1957 when they traveled each year to Europe to buy stock for their fledgling bookselling business. Through their first-hand reports, we see war-ruined Europe--and its surviving sellers of rare books--slowly recovering a civilization that the Nazis had tried to destroy. The authors invented the very effective device of placing a retrospective paragraph after every few excerpts. Each "Retrospect" fills in the background of what was happening, and adds the authors' perspective on it all from many years later. This is first-rate autobiographical writing. As their detective work takes the firm of Rostenberg and Stern to eccentric bookshops, where they root out old and rare, often obscure, but very important books, we find ourselves with them in the company of Civilization. Old Books in the Old World: Reminiscences of Book Buying Abroad 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Old Stories about Old Books in the Old World By Jerry Guild Although I love "Books About Books"; I, like the majority of those who love books and reading, know very little, nor have had the experience of searching for, buying and selling Antiquarian books and Ephemera. While never part of that world, I found this book about it, a delightful read. To the authors of this book, it was their whole life. They not only had the experiences they tell us about; but also made a successful career of it and made their living at it. They are no longer with us; Leona Rostenberg passed away on March 17, 2005 at the age

of 96, while Madeleine Stern passed away on August 18, 2007 at the age of 95. They spent their entire adult lives living and working together. The world of books and their friendship were everything to them. This book is mainly comprised of the journals they kept of their trips to England and Europe during the years after WWII, from 1947 to 1957. Their descriptions of what things were like after the destruction and hardships of recovery after the war are as much of what this book is about as the rare books they are able to find. Of course, as in any endeavor, the people you meet and the friendships that develop along the way, are what most enjoyments of pursuits are all about. It is amazing, the amount of 15th - 18th Century books that were available, for what seems today like pittance. The books they find, and talk about are virtually unknown to me, and very shortly after being found ended up in special collections in libraries, universities and with wealthy collectors. The experiences of the authors lasted for only a decade or so. That was the time when money was hard to find, collections all over Europe had been plundered, scattered about, and great rarities could be found in many bookstores. All that soon ended, when word got around and hordes of dealers started to swarm the continent and these sorts of gems were scooped up and rapidly skyrocketed in price. Where real treasures could be found for the price of a meal or less, they soon became available at a "King's Ransom"; if at all. A wonderful read, for Bibliophiles and book buyers; from the novice to the astute Antiquarian.

First edition. In their books *OLD RARE* and *BETWEEN BOARDS*, these two grand ladies of the bookselling world, Leona Rostenberg and Madeleine B. Stern, recounted many of their stories and hard-learned advice gleaned from decades in the book business. This newest volume records for the first time in detail their bookbuying trips abroad between 1947 and 1957. Drawn from their original diaries and letters of the time and augmented with contemporary recollections, this book renders with an unparalleled sense of immediacy the horrors and treasures to be found in postwar Europe. Visiting London in the late forties, these two scholar-booksellers found among the bombed blocks of buildings and queues for rationed food, some of the most illustrious names in bookselling, Clifford Maggs, E.P. Goldschmidt, and Ernest Weil. Deprived of food and spirit, Europe overflowed with bibliographic treasures waiting to be discovered by these two distinguished ladies and passed on to some of the most renowned libraries in the United States. Unknown works by Martin Luther, original editions of Giorgio Vasari, and countless other rarities from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were purchased. Full of history and tales of books, this book is as perfect for the casual reader as it is for the sophisticated book collector. 168 pages. cloth, dust jacket. 8vo..

.com If your pulse increases inexplicably at the sight of a used bookstore, if your heart leaps like a hungry weasel when you encounter a rare first edition that has been erroneously priced at \$5.00, this collection of journal entries and letters of two American book dealers in Post-War Europe is certain to delight you. Although I personally would have enjoyed this book more if it had been fleshed out more completely, its presentation--whether by intention or chance--has the same serendipitous and chaotic feeling as rummaging through the bookstores and bookstalls of Europe.