

## Confessions of an Antiquarian Book Dealer

During the five years that we lived outside Mons in Belgium, we frequently tramped the battlefields and visited the cemeteries and memorials of those who were killed during the First World War.

When we settled in the peace of Thomas Hardy's Dorset, we realized that we would never cease to be haunted by these memories, and a need to "wipe off the blood-guiltiness" was a driving force which influenced our decision to start a small out-of-print book business; an inadequate attempt to answer Richard Aldington's cry: "What can we do? Headstones and wreaths and memorials and speeches and the Cenotaph—no, no, it has got to be something in us. . . ."

We gather books written by men and women, whether they are well known or obscure, and as Palladour Books send annually worldwide two catalogues on the literature and poetry of the First World War. We include pre- and post-war titles by authors such as Edward Thomas, who died so soon after the birth of his poetry; Richard Aldington; Edmund Blunden; Robert Graves; and Siegfried Sassoon, all of whom survived the horrors of the trenches and lived to enrich English literature.

Our customers (many of whom become correspondents and friends) cover a wide range of interests and backgrounds; historians and students, who require inexpensive "reading" copies of books for research purposes; university librarians, who prefer books in very good condition but not necessarily in first edition; and private collectors, who are looking for books in very good or fine condition, in dustwrappers, and in first or limited editions. It is, therefore, virtually impossible to gauge the "worth" of any particular book as this has to be assessed against a variety of factors. Our prices reflect what we have paid, which is itself governed by the condition, edition, and scarcity of a book.

All the original editions of the well-known Great War writers are expensive not only because they are rare and difficult to find, but because the value of a particular book increases greatly if it is one of a limited edition or if it is inscribed by the author. Two author examples, for instance, such as Robert Graves' *Over the Brazier* and *Fairies and Fusiliers* or Ivor Gurney's *Severn and Somme* and *War's Embers and other Verses* are extremely rare and therefore command very high prices. Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That* in the first state of the first edition, which includes Siegfried Sassoon's letter poem, is seldom seen. (It is believed that fewer than one hundred copies were published.) Last spring, we sold a copy of this book in its dustwrapper in almost fine condition for over 350 pounds; without the dustwrapper, the price drops dramatically.

A random selection of authors whose books are on our shelves at the time of writing is listed below. These are in various editions and differing condition, and range in price from 5 pounds to 500 pounds. Not included in the list, but

part of our stock, are diaries, memoirs, and books of poetry, many of which were printed for private circulation by grieving families after a beloved husband or son had been killed.

Henri Barbusse  
Edmund Blunden  
Rupert Brooke  
John Brophy  
Ford Maddox Ford  
Robert Frost  
Robert Graves  
Ivor Gurney  
Thomas Hardy  
David Jones

C.E. Montague  
R.H. Mottram  
Wilfred Owen  
Max Plowman  
Isaac Rosenberg  
Siegfried Sassoon  
Charles Sorley  
Edward Thomas  
Henry Williamson  
Arnold Zweig

Anne Powell  
Palladour Books  
Greenlands, Foot's Hill  
Cann, Nr. Shaftsbury  
Dorset SP7 OBW  
England