Thirlstaine House. In 1944 the Robinson Brothers, a London antiquarian firm, offered £100,000 for it, sight unseen. Apparently, in March 1945, they offered it to Harvard for £110,000, but after much negotiation and efforts to raise money, revealed here in quotations from cables, the offer was turned down. A similar offer was also turned down by the British Museum. The Robinsons then decided to sell the manuscripts and books themselves and began to remove things from their warehouse. In less than a year they had recouped their investment, and ninety percent remained. It became the book deal of the century and they went out of business in 1956 to set up a trust to dispose of the residue of the Phillipps Collection. Even then a residue of the residue was sold to H.P. Kraus for a million dollars.

This working autobiography has several stories like this. It is for dipping and perhaps Roger Stoddard is working on a real memoir.

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Mary Hyde Eccles, the American collector, editor, and moving force in a select circle of international bibliophiles, has been honoured by her fellow members of New York’s Grolier Club on her ninetieth birthday with this collection of essays and addresses. The volume is a loving tribute, and as such it will be most appreciated by her many friends and fellow collectors. For those of us outside this rarefied world the collection will have less appeal. At times, one has to admit, it is downright boring. However the patient reader will find some fascinating glimpses into the arcane world of wealthy American book collectors and an introduction to some of the useful academic work that Hyde Eccles has embarked on in her long career.

This selection, mostly previously unpublished work, is curious. Made up of short addresses, reminiscences, elegies, and even a one-act play starring her husband and his bibliophile friends, it covers her long career as a book lover and collector, beginning with a 1946 article about a Shakespeare forgery and ending with a 2001 talk about her family history. Many of the selections trace the development
of the collection that Hyde Eccles and her two husbands assembled over the years and housed in their New Jersey home, Four Oaks Farm. She tells us in great detail the convoluted history of her determined efforts to assemble her important collection of Johnson and Boswell papers and enjoys giving us anecdotes about visits from academics who travelled to her library to work with the papers. The selection includes an affectionate portrait of Samuel Johnson's wife, "Tetty and Johnson," and, the most engaging piece in the book, a reprinting of the foreword to the first edition of Hyde Eccles's collection of the correspondence between Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas. This article includes a fascinating summary of Wilde's trial, his relationship with Douglas and his prison experience, as well as some background on the relationship between Douglas and Shaw. It encourages us to find out more by picking up her 1982 edited text, *Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas: A Correspondence*.

Much of the collection is concerned with Hyde Eccles's long involvement with the Grolier Club and this will make the book invaluable to those interested in the history and development of this important community of American book collectors. The organisation, founded in 1884, maintains a 100,000-volume library in New York City and is dedicated to "the literary study and promotion of the arts pertaining to the production of books." Hyde Eccles and her first husband, Donald Hyde, first became involved with the Club in 1940 and this book is full of anecdotes and details about its development. She gives us a feeling for the passion that motivates this select group when she tells us, with the enthusiasm of a rock and roll fan experiencing a sighting of Mick Jagger, about her excitement when she "glimpsed some of the greats of the book world" across a crowded room.

It is clear from the recollections just how much of a gentleman's club the elite world of book collectors was until a few years ago. Hyde Eccles dedicated 36 years of her life to building and supporting the Grolier Club while being denied membership because she was a woman. Finally, in 1976, she became one of the first women invited to join. But in this respect the Grolier Club is not unique: the chronology of Hyde Eccles's life at the beginning of the book notes that in 1985 she was the first woman elected to the Roxburghe Club, the British equivalent of the New York organisation.

As important as the Grolier Club and the world of book collectors may be, there are many times throughout this selection when an outsider like me has to protest: Mary, Mary! Too much information!
The text is inundated with detail after gossipy detail of events, trips, and individuals that may be of great interest to people within her circle but that will leave the rest of us cold.

In spite of its weaknesses, this selection of Mary Hyde Eccles’s writings is important. For members and friends of the community of book collectors it will be a cherished resource. For scholars dedicated to researching the history of book collecting it will be an invaluable tool. And for people like me it gives an opportunity to appreciate and thank Mary Hyde Eccles and the other remarkable men and women who use their wealth and passion to preserve and protect our literary heritage.

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