

recognize the dark figure outside the window keeping step with the locomotive till both came to a halt and there were quietly spoken greetings (no puffing).

*The Kemble Occasional*, 'Issued now and then from the Edward C. Kemble Collections,' may escape attention among the full-dress contributions in George Harding's bibliography, and that would be unfortunate. The seventeen numbers, dated November 1964 to December 1976, are a treasury of digested information and Pacific Coast printing reference. The honorary curator of the Kemble and associated collections offered reminiscences and autobiographical notes and asides that are doubtless the best sources of knowledge and information about him. The seventeenth number is a memorial issue, 'Our Memories of George Laban Harding 1893-1976.'

Ray Nash

#### JOHN SICHER VAN EISEN KOHN

John Kohn, antiquarian bookseller, was born on the island of Manhattan on October 6, 1906, of a distinguished family many of whose members had also been born on the island. When someone expressed fears of being mugged in these environs, he was wont to reassure them by saying that not one of his relatives had suffered that indignity during a period of more than a century.

Kohn graduated from Williams College in 1928 and earned his master's degree from Harvard two years later. He was attracted to a career in bookselling very soon after he had completed his academic experience and spent a novitiate of four years at the Argosy Bookshop on East Fifty-ninth Street in New York. The valuable training he received at that busy and thriving shop emboldened him to establish his own business under the name of Collectors Bookshop. This enterprise

prospered as he became known among the collecting fraternity but the advent of war and three years' service in the army brought about a hiatus in these activities. When he returned from overseas he formed a partnership with Michael Papantonio, a well-known bookseller, whose career had likewise been interrupted by wartime service. This joining of forces resulted in the establishment of an enterprise, Seven Gables Bookshop, that in time earned an international reputation for service and integrity. Kohn and Papantonio were elected members of the American Antiquarian Society in 1969.

Kohn specialized in the field of manuscripts and first editions of American literature. At the time he began his activities in that area, the field had a rather sparse following among collectors and libraries. The forty-six years that have elapsed since then have witnessed a phenomenal growth in interest in our national literature. Today in this country no library worth its salt is without a general collection of this material or at least some phase of it. In foreign countries there has been, likewise, a burgeoning of interest in American writing and many institutions there have established or augmented courses of study which has necessitated the building up of their collections of American works.

Kohn himself was in no small part responsible for this phenomenon. Over the years he acquired an encyclopedic knowledge of the bibliographic identification of the works of American literature and made his expertise freely available to librarians, scholars, and collectors. He took an active interest in building up the holdings of institutional and private libraries. In addition, he contributed a number of articles to publications devoted to the subject. Perhaps, however, the catalogues he issued over some forty years give us a better idea of the breadth of his knowledge and the importance of his service. From his beginnings in the field, Kohn displayed an extraordinary interest in the first writings and the first pub-

lications of American writers. One of his earliest catalogues was devoted to these early efforts and this has been followed at intervals by others in the same vein. This was, however, only one facet of his interests and the scholarly catalogues he published covering fiction, poetry, drama, and bibliographical works provide a valuable commentary on the history and the changing fashions of American book buying over four decades.

The shop established on the premises at 3 West Forty-sixth Street in New York by Kohn and Papantonio shortly after the end of the war has become a mecca for bibliophiles from all over the United States and from foreign countries. It is not overstating the case to say that Kohn became the leading authority on first and important editions of American literature. He was an interested and active member of the American Antiquarian Society. The Society's incomparable holdings in American literature have been enriched by his counsel and his gifts. He will be sorely missed as a member, a friend, and a benefactor.

C. Waller Barrett

### SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON

Samuel Eliot Morison was born in Boston on July 9, 1887, and died there nearly eighty-nine years later on May 15, 1976. He lived most of his life at 44 Brimmer Street in Boston. He graduated from Harvard in 1908, sharing a family tradition with, among others, several Samuel Eliots, President Charles W. Eliot, Charles Eliot Norton, and Elting E. Morison. During his junior year he decided on teaching and writing history as an objective after graduation and in his twenty-fifth Harvard class report, he wrote: 'History is a humane discipline that sharpens the intellect and broadens the mind, offers contacts with people, nations, and civilizations,

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