

Lichtenstein, Richard  
Son of Charles L.

## Seventy Years of Bookselling

PAUL S. SEYBOLT

ONE DAY early in the spring of the year 1867, Mr. Thomas Oliver Hazard Perry Burnham, the antique bookseller of 143 Washington Street, Boston, engaged a new clerk, a junior clerk—an eleven-year-old boy of German descent living in Boston's West End. His name was Richard Lichtenstein, and he came well recommended. His father had come to America with Louis Kossuth, but had died prematurely. The young man had been brought up a member of Dr. Edward Everett Hale's Church, and had been reared in an atmosphere of thrift and industry.

Richard as a bookseller's clerk, errand boy, and general handy man, proved eager to learn and quick to grasp the many details of the business. In 1869 the Burnham Antique Book Store moved to 68 School Street. In 1883 it moved once more, this time to the basement of the Old South Meeting House on Washington Street, where it remained until 1913 when it took its present quarters on famous old Cornhill. Mr. Burnham had died in 1891 and his three employees, of

which Mr. Lichtenstein was the youngest, had taken over the business. Today he is the sole survivor.

This man approaching his eighty-second year has spent seventy uninterrupted years in the business of selling second-hand books. His famous feat of finding Poe's "Tamerlane" in a neighboring bookseller's ten-cent bin is now well known, and has proved an inspiration to many an impecunious collector. It is not generally recalled, however, that up until that time (1891) the only known copy of "Tamerlane" was that in the British Museum, which had been considered unique.

He located the first inscribed copy of Amy Lowell's "Dream Drops" to appear at public sale, and realized the importance and potential value of the first edition of Mary Baker Eddy's "Science and Health" years before other booksellers and collectors had considered it more than just another religious discussion. He has been for years an ardent student of book-plates and their literature, and has become an authority upon the subject. His fine collection of postage stamps is well known.