

## Sotheby's at Hodgson's Rooms, London

NINETEENTH CENTURY AND MODERN FIRST EDITIONS SALE, 18-19 DECEMBER 1980

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Some interesting H.W. items went under the hammer at this auction, where the bulk of the first day's 328 lots were the property of the late Walter de la Mare and Richard de la Mare. (Richard de la Mare was one-time Chairman of Faber and Faber and responsible for publishing a good many of H.W.'s books, notably *Salar the Salmon*.)

Lot 321 comprised a set of page proofs of *The Star-Born* (1933), obviously from the editorial offices of the publisher, Fabers, and covered in pencilled instructions and corrections. There were also some autograph revisions by H.W. and although this doesn't appear to be the heavily corrected set of proofs that turned up in Max Brimmell's catalogue years ago, nevertheless it was a fine item. The price it made, however, £150, seemed to us overly high.

The following lot, 322, was a desirable first edition of *The Linhay of the Downs* (1934) inscribed to Walter de la Mare: "To Walter (Orion-like)". It fetched an unspectacular £55, and has subsequently been encountered on the second-hand market at a considerably higher price.

Lot 323, page proofs of *Genius of Friendship: T.E. Lawrence* (1941), excited a deal of interest - particularly from the Lawrence camp, which remains a buoyant market. These proofs, bearing some pencilled instructions from H.W. to Richard de la Mare, also contained autograph revisions and some fairly substantial rewritten passages by him. Not surprisingly, the hammer went down at £220.

Three copies of the first gathering of a projected edition of *The Star-Born* (1933) limited to 50 signed copies (a fourth copy having been included in Lot 321), along with a couple of standard H.W. first editions, comprised Lot 324. These were quite interesting, not only for being signed, but because the eventual signed issue of *The Star-Born* was limited to 70 copies; so the projected issue of 50 copies was either abandoned or increased, perhaps due to a more successful subscription report.

An earlier lot particularly attracted our attention. The second edition (whatever H.W. thought) of Edward Thomas's biography *Richard Jefferies* (1911), inscribed by the author: "Walter de la Mare from E.T. 1911". We gave up at £100 and the brave buyer eventually paid £130 (plus Sotheby's buyers' premium, VAT extra), and so we reluctantly turned to *The Sun in the Sands*, page 20, and wished we were richer!

*I talked to a dark attractive man leaning against a wall with his hands in his pockets, who was a famous poet called Walter de la Mare...he had known Edward Thomas, whose book on Richard Jefferies I was longing to possess! It was out-of-print, never having gone into a second edition. Oh, why had Edward Thomas been killed? And to think that I had, all unknowingly, been only a short distance away from him on that ninth day of April nearly four years before, at the opening of the Battle of Arras in the snow!*