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Notes: Owen D. Young as Collector

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Young as Collector:

The story of Young's "Tamerlane" is as far as Goodspeed is concerned, is the high light with his dealing with Young. You get enlightened wisdom in Goodspeed's talk. He has been at it so long; he has followed so many blind trails; it could hardly be wondered then that when in 1827, evidently very few copies, a book which only to the knowing seemed to have any value - the last copy of which had turned up only years before this and brought a price of Ten Thousand dollars - Whom Mr. Goodspeed received a letter saying that Mrs. Ada Dodd had a copy of Tamerlane the first reaction should have been, "I doubt it."

But the collector of books like the writer of biography, like the novelist reaching a human soul, but no hint; he follows each to its source. If five times out of ten, perhaps eight out of ten, is on a blind trail - he may unearth a treasure.

So Mr. Goodspeed wrote to Mrs. Starr that he would call upon her in Worcester on a near afternoon.

He described the modest house in which Mrs. Dodd lived - a small two-story place which he learned that she owned, renting the lower floor, living with a sister; found a woman of seventy or so, evidently a vigorous person for she pieced out her income by taking in sewing. He told of his errand. She brought out the book and to Mr. Goodspeed's amazement was a genuine copy of Tamerlane and where did she get it? This is the story she told:

"A newspaper clipping:
Now, did he suppose she could get $10,000 for this book? Mr. Goodspeed told the lady that he did not know but if she wanted to trust it to him he would see what he could do for her — that if she wished to take $8,000 he would give it to her, but he wouldn't advise her to do that — he would advise her to let him take the book and let him see what he could do with it.

Evidently she trusted him at once, which put the book into his hands. Mr. Goodspeed, however, was not willing to take it until he had reference of some well-known person in Worcester. It was a Sunday, his friends were hard to discover but finally he did find someone who could vouch for him to Mrs. Dodd. And so he took away the book.

He tells the story of how Mr. Young's interest in Poe he offered it but at the moment Mr. Young was not in the market — he had reached the limit of his buying budget. The summer went on and Mr. Goodspeed was preparing to announce his find in his coming catalogue of rare pieces when he received a call from Mr. Young. Wouldn't he bring the book down? The outcome of it was that Mr. Young did take the book and that Mr. Goodspeed along in of ? motored over ? to see Mrs. Dodd.

"I have sold the book," he said to the eager lady. "Did you get $10,000?" she exclaimed. "Yes," he said, "I got $10,000 for you. And he laid before her a check for $14,000.

She could scarcely believe her eyes. "Do you mean to say," she said, "that all this is mine? That I can go into Boston whenever there is a sale and that I can take a taxi if I want to?"
"Yes," Mr. Goodspeed told her. He thought it was safe to say that if she took care of the money she could take a taxi now and then. He expected only one promise from her that she put her money in a savings bank and yielded to the solicitation of promoters to invest.

Mr. Goodspeed advises me that here is a pretty story of the way Young acquired his first copy of Shakespeare, also the manuscript of Alice in Wonderland. He is wise in many ways about books - tells me the aftermath of the Tamerlane how there turned up a claimant, people from Milford claiming that the book had been borrowed from their family, that they should have the $14,000.
Mr. Young's collection of books before the college students. It is not so easy to entice the youth that comes into a great industry set out to make a record there to keep himself in touch with the world of. Mr. Young never loses a chance to throw in some enticing outside matter that may tempt the boy engrossed with consider both sides of life kind of thing connecting the General Electric a few years ago with the group known as the Test Boys. (See manuscript)

It is encouraging one in an avocation and it happens that more than one of his young assistants have been aroused to collecting - general reading - through his enthusiasm of collecting. It is a vital (Quote Crocker) Nobody knows better the value intellectually and spiritually of an avocation like collecting books, that is, if you are collecting something you really care for and if you read what you collect.

Mr. Young's list of tests is very important because it has that is, he started out a young man in the organization now for ten years he has been the force.