

Book Reviews: A Group of Grammars, Kettle of Kettubah and Slew of Suggestions

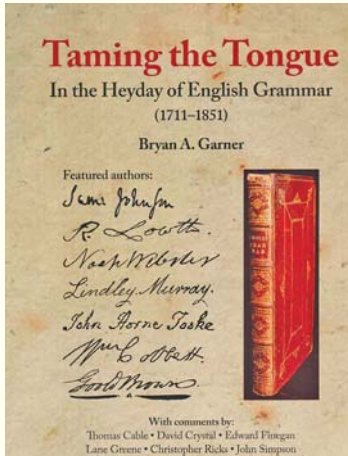
WILLIAM L. BUTTS

GARNER, Bryan A. *Taming the Tongue: In the Heyday of English Grammar (1711-1851)*. New York: The Grolier Club, 2021. Small 4to. Hardbound, dust jacket. xxv, 299pp. Numerous color illustrations. Edition limited to 950 numbered copies. **\$75.00.**

SABAR, Shalom. *The Art of the Ketubbah: Marriage Contracts from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary*. New York: Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 2022. Two volumes. 4to. xxxv, 391pp; ix, pp. 396-846. Extensive color illustrations, maps. **Hardbound \$125.00, softbound \$99.00.**

STUART, Spencer W. *Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting: A Handbook for Collectors and the Trade*. N.p.: Spencer W. Stuart, 2023. Small 4to. Softbound. 91pp. Illustrations. **\$100.00.**

Page xxvi of Bryan Garner's *Taming the Tongue: In the Heyday of English Grammar (1711-1851)* shows a grey metal rolling book cart such as you see in any library, its three shelves crammed with mostly leatherbound volumes of varying sizes and conditions, with two massive folio volumes standing alongside. It's a random image that would elicit a yawn from a non-bibliophile and tingles of excitement from a book person – as well it should. For this humble image actually represents the entire contents of



the exhibition showcased at New York's Grolier Club from March 4 through May 15, 2021, profiled and gloriously illustrated in this superb exhibition catalogue. *Taming the Tongue* is one of the most thrilling, page-turning catalogues ever reviewed in this column's quarter century – and numerous stellar examples have appeared here.

The subject is English grammar books. Huh, what? No, that wasn't a typo. It's easy to

make a Shakespeare First Folio or Gutenberg Bible and make them appealing to non-scholars – to take a legendary historical object and make it sexy. But... English grammars? C'mon – *really?* I mean – *English grammar books?*

Really. This superlative exhibition catalogue will delight not only wordsmiths, word nerds and English Lit folk like myself. Anyone who appreciates language, anyone drawn to handsome old books and documents – readers of *Manuscripts*, for instance – will find this well-written, well-illustrated volume addictive. The fact that English grammars, with a couple notable exceptions, are given scant attention by most collectors just makes them all the more seductive. After all, it's more satisfying to make finds in an arcane specialty field with a small but devoted following than to pay top dollar for outrageously popular titles collected by a great many in which competition goes beyond fierce.

Name an English grammar book by title. Go ahead, I double dog dare you. The closest I can come up with are the two at my elbow, *The Chicago Manual of Style* and Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, neither of which are grammars in the traditional sense of the word. Almost none of us learned English grammar under a single author or system, so non-existent has this once-popular genre become over the past half century.

Bryan Garner – lexicographer, legal scholar, prolific

writer on English style and usage – is a grammar evangelist extraordinaire, a diehard grammarian and grammar book collector whose enthusiasm is as infectious as his knowledge is deep. *Taming the Tongue* surveys one hundred significant items (mostly but not all books) culled from his collection of more than 1,900 grammars. These constitute part of a library of 38,000 volumes that also includes more than 4,000 dictionaries – but hey, who’s counting?

Garner opens the tour of his treasures with a preface and prehistory that provide context and set the stage for the onslaught of grammars that followed Jonathan Swift’s pivotal *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712). “This effervescent fascination with English grammar sees the genre begin in a rudimentary phase,” he writes,

in which English grammars are cursory works modeled closely on Latin grammars – and then mature into a phase in which hundreds of books of varying sophistication vie for commercial dominance. By the mid-19th century, the entrants are mostly confident about their grammatical positions, and traditional prescriptive grammars are at their zenith. Millions of copies – tens of millions – are sold. Taken together, grammars trail only the Bible in British and American book sales.

Along with the Bible, Shakespeare and *Pilgrim’s Progress* are usually mentioned as titles most often found in early American households. One wonders where Garner would place English grammars amongst these three. He also briefly surveys the handful of English grammars, from William Bullokar’s 1586 *Pamphlet for Grammar* to William Turner’s 1710 *A Short Grammar for the English Tongue* – many written in Latin – that predate the 150-year span that is his focus.

“The 100 Items,” offered chronologically, consist mostly of books that are mostly grammars, but occasionally a document or closely-related title will be included. The title page of nearly every grammar is illustrated, as are many bindings, a sample

page, and a portrait of the grammarian. All grammars pictured include a handy citation to standard bibliographies in which they appear, a list of which Garner thoughtfully includes. He wisely decides to eschew past tense in his descriptions of each item. “Throughout, I’ve used the historical present tense when writing about the grammarians and their grammars,” he explains. “To me, it makes their lives and their work more immediate and alive.” Kudos on this gutsy move. It does indeed make his tight, elegant prose addressing this assortment of grammars and grammarians (mostly little-known clerics and teachers, groups often considered unexciting) leap off the pages.

Best of all, in these one-, two- and occasionally three-page entries, Garner offers up biographical details on these often-obscure grammarians and explains the significance of each grammar – its place in the larger context of grammar history. Grammarians, the entries also show, all deplore every grammar prior to theirs in terms ranging from genteel to vicious and boast about their own grammar in terms that would make an infomercial blush.

For a collecting category as narrow as English grammars, Garner provides a pleasing variety of fascinating grammars and grammarians, all heavily illustrated. He displays competing pedagogies, eccentric agendas and conflicting personalities that make *Taming the Tongue* a surprisingly lively, adventurous read.

From this over-abundance of intriguing material, the commenting upon which could fill many pages, let’s cull out some notable examples and recurring themes:

-- Samuel Kirkham’s 1832 *English Grammar in Familiar Lectures* (1827) Garner includes partly because of its enormous foldout frontispiece chart, which “Undoubtedly... has more grammatical information printed on it than any single page ever before printed.” He also points out an amusingly “egregious printer’s error” on the title page, where “English” appears “Engish” – ouch! History buffs may know Kirkham’s *English Grammar* for another reason, though: This is

the same text that a juvenile Abraham Lincoln walked miles to retrieve and committed to memory, if Carl Sandburg is to be believed – and for this reason the only title in *Taming the Tongue* that this reviewer/bookseller has handled.

-- In the just-plain-weird category is Robert Baker's innocuous *Remarks on the English Language* (1770). This "ill-schooled buffoon" confesses his own ignorance and poor school record, "descend[ing] into bizarre self-deprecation" in describing his purpose – but somehow also makes the surprisingly on-target prediction that America will break from England and "will one Day form a vast independent Empire...." Equally bizarre is John Horne Tooke, who in his two-volume *Eitea Iitepoenta: Or the Diversions of Purley* (1798, 1805) argues that "nouns and verbs are the essential words, and all others 'are merely abbreviations' of three rather obscure kinds.... (A fuller explanation won't clarify, believe me.) He argues at some length that *if* is really the verb *to give*. (If this sounds nuts to you, you're right)."

-- No grammarian bears more entries (items #28, 31, 32, 44, 53, 59, 84, 88, 92) than Noah Webster, whose name is today synonymous with dictionary. Imperious and intensely dislikeable, Webster (who Garner calls a "vitriolic pedant") publishes a dizzying array of grammars and other writings on grammar, all concisely elaborated on by Garner. Webster also thrusts and parries with the most famous grammarian you've never heard of: Lindley Murray, "the most celebrated grammarian in history – and the best-selling author of the first half of the 19th century." Murray's 1795 *English Grammar Adapted to the Different Classes of Learners* "becomes a prime literary commodity" and Garner pictures a large shelfful of British and American editions from his collection. Autographs appear frequently in these pages, and Garner highlights

some Webster and Murray doozies. Of the 31 Webster documents in his collection, he illustrates a fine example showing Webster, perennially strapped for cash and not a savvy negotiator, pursuing cash in exchange for “the remainder of my copyright” at bargain basement prices loved by publishers. Of the few Murray documents included, the choicest is a 1794 document in which Webster purchases a New York building from his soon-to-be archrival, Englishman Murray (through Lindley’s brother in America) – which raises intriguing issues about Murray’s *English Grammar*, published a few months later. Garner notes, “Never before has this document been publicly exhibited for what it is. Neither Webster’s nor Murray’s biographers have known about it. I acquired it in 2015....”

-- Some grammars have strangely specific agendas. *The Circles of Gomer... with an English Grammar* (1771) presents Rowland Jones’ theory that Welsh is the mother of all languages and that “linguistic regression will lead to a universal language” – English, of course. He then gives more than 200 pages of arcane evidence and “The 27-page grammar starts on the 205th page.” Then there is Mark Ussher’s *An English Pronouncing Grammar* (1794), whose elocutionist author fixates on “reforming children’s Irish accents” and “whose sole purpose is to reform accent and pronunciation – all 208 pages of it.”

-- Three entries published nearly a century apart draw attention because all were mainstays in their day and all were massive doorstops. William Ward’s 1765 *An Essay on Grammar, as It May Be Applied to the English Language* is “the most comprehensive of 18th-century grammars” at 554 pages; William Chauncey Fowler’s 1850 *English Grammar: The English Language in Its Elements and Forms* is “the fullest exposition of the era” at 675 pages; and Gould Brown’s 1851 *The*

Grammar of English Grammars is a “superabundance of notes addressing seemingly every English-language grammarian’s position on any linguistic matter,” weighing in at a hernia-inducing “gargantuan 1,102-page[s].”

Taming the Tongue also features three meaty appendices. Do not, as do many, gloss over these. Much glorious autograph material and stories of fine sleuthing behind them reside in the “Some Curiosities in the Stacks” appendix. An “Interesting Artwork in Books Not exhibited” likewise presents a great small assortment of memorable images from other grammars – back when “Corporal punishment [was] a frequent motif in 19th-century grammars.”

In the “no book is perfect” spirit, a book review almost never brings up spelling and grammar and typographical snafus unless errors are plentiful and grievous (such as a popular Lincoln biography of recent years in which Sandburg is consistently spelled “Sandberg”). After reviewing hundreds of titles in this column, I’ve found that in even the best of them a few minor typographical errors slip through. Good luck finding flaw in *Taming the Tongue*. In the end, this fastidious former editor notes only one measly missing period – that’s right, a “.” -- at the close of one sentence (handily added with black ballpoint).

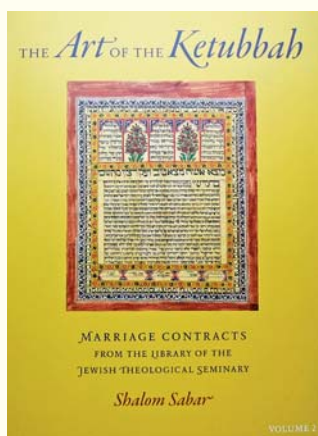
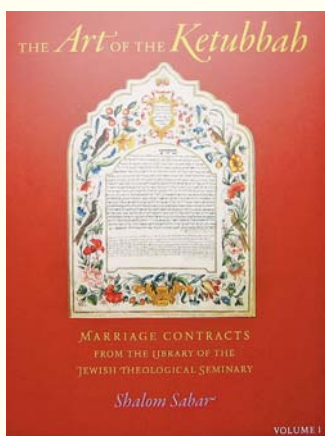
Taming the Tongue, I’m pleased to report, is as perfect as it gets.

Taming the Tongue is hands down the single most thorough, well-rounded exploration of its subject I have encountered, a reflection of this notable scholar and collector’s boundless enthusiasm and expertise on the material. Three appendices, a superb lengthy bibliography – there’s even a “Comments” section in which seven noted authorities (mostly distinguished professors) offer up several pages each of reactions to the book and its subject. All these evince an author who can scarcely contain the subject matter within a book’s covers. *Taming the Tongue* is not a bibliography of grammars by any means, but think of it as the most erudite tour guide imaginable giving you an intimate annotated “best of” walk-through of memorable examples.

One of the great joys and delightful bonuses of collecting books and autographs, whether by vocation or avocation, is that it exposes you to fields which never crossed your mind and in which you never expressed the slightest interest. Such may be the case with Bryan A. Garner's *Taming the Tongue: In the Heyday of English Grammar (1711-1851)*. Who would think that English grammars could be the subject of such a riveting, adventurous ride. This educational, entertaining chronicle may just set you off on a new and unexpected collecting path.

Judaica has long been a strong, vibrant collecting field in the autograph universe, yet books related to Jewish manuscripts appear infrequently. So I'm especially pleased to introduce Shalom Sabar's impressive *The Art of the Ketubbah: Marriage Contracts from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary*.

Ketubbot (plural ketubbah), of which this *goyim* professes complete unfamiliarity, are as the book's subtitle clarifies a form of Jewish marriage contract. They are far more than that, though: Think of them as a trailblazing early form of social security and alimony. Throughout history many societies have demanded payment in some form from a prospective groom to the prospective bride's family – money, cattle, other highly-valued commodities. Such demands often dashed the hopes of



wanna-be husbands of modest means. The ketubbot, on the other hand, spells out the groom's future duties to his wife, postponing financial issues until a time when he would presumably be better off; usually these involved payment of a specific sum in the case of divorce or in the event that he predeceased the wife – both important protections.

The Art of the Ketubbah: Marriage Contracts from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary are two large, lovely tomes with text by a distinguished professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem elucidating 472 ketubbah from “the premier research library for Judaica and Hebraica in the Western hemisphere.” Notes the foreword:

The Library has assembled a monumental, world-class collection of ketubbot... spanning thirty-seven countries on four continents from the tenth through the twenty-first centuries. The ketubbot document the rich variety of decorating and calligraphic styles used by Jewish communities to enhance the ancient text formula they shared, in which the commitment and obligations of bride and groom were publicly declared... In their distinctions and variations, these contracts reveal social customs, family relationships, economic situations, and a community's interactions with the world around it.

“The Jewish marriage contract,” writes Sabar in a preface especially informative to those not versed in this document, “... is a unique Jewish object.”

Its development, usage, and appearance reveal fascinating issues pertaining to daily Jewish life and culture throughout its long history over two millennia. Created by the rabbis of old as a written, legal deed of marriage in order to provide security and protection to the bride during the course of her life after marriage, the ketubbah emerged in many communities as an attractive document, designed with great care and

joyfully enhanced by bright colorful designs. Its physical presence at the wedding has become central and a source of pride and attention. No other traditional decorative Judaic object brings together such a wealth of textual and visual information on bygone Jewish life...

Readers are well advised to study the table of contents of *The Art of the Ketubbah* thoroughly. It helps clarify the whirlwind, worldwide distribution of this great mass of documents – quite a forest with many beautifully distracting trees. It opens with a hefty array of (to my surprise) Italian ketubbah – nearly two-thirds of the first volume – followed by Ashkenazim (that is, central European based) western and eastern Europe, Sephardim (Spanish based) western Europe, North Africa and Asia, and lastly Israel and the United States.

Delving into this archive of what must have been an enormous scholarly project, one finds that the vast majority of these 472 ketubbah date from the 18th through 20th centuries – even those in an addenda of “Newly Acquired Ketubbot” fall within this time frame. Only a small second addenda of “Ketubbot from the Cairo Genizah” includes medieval examples. All of the oldest ketubah hail from here – dozens of examples, largely on vellum and only a few illustrated, almost all mere fragments and scraps. Many date from the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. It’s extraordinary they survived at all, and despite their overall poor condition they remain powerful, provocative pieces. (For more on the Cairo Genizah, see my review of Mark Glickman’s *Sacred Treasure of the Cairo Genizah* in the Fall 2011 issue of *Manuscripts*.)

Visually, the wealth of examples illustrated in this storehouse are stunning. Size and shape vary enormously. Rectangles dominate (portrait and landscape), and these sometimes come to a peak or semicircle (usually at the top, occasionally at the bottom), sometimes with complex shapes resembling a crown. Others are square, some circular, even shapes that defy description. There are scalloped edges, indented corners and other decorative edges.

As for decorations—well, no two appear alike and the only limitation seems to be the artist's inventiveness. The central portion bears the carefully calligraphed text, sometimes in two-column format and generally boxed in with a decorative border or borders consisting of stately architectural columns topped with capitals of all types. Surrounding this are highly colored elaborate decorations: climbing vines lush with flowers, fruit and perched birds, complex geometric shapes and designs, family insignia and shields and crests, devilish putti in various poses usually associated with Christian art, vignettes showing wedding scenes, statuesque vases overflowing with greenery, Adam and Eve imagery, Stars of David but also Christian symbols, and cartouches bearing iconic Jewish images galore.... All this barely scratches the surface of the rich illustrations pictured, and Sabar deftly dissects and analyzes the decorations in each. That small percentage consisting of text only simply cannot compare to this visual richness.

As expected, the condition of these ketubbah vary enormously. A refreshingly high percentage are wonderfully preserved in clean, fresh condition with colors as bright as the day they were applied. Others show evidence of the abuse that comes with time and neglect -- crude early or modern sophisticated archival mends, dampstaining, even charred edges. A good number show the expected mild to heavy age toning, splits along ancient fold lines, edge chipping and all those factors that occur over the centuries.

Ironically, one of the poorest condition ketubbot included (#446) was printed in New York in 1922. Printed on acidic wood pulp paper of comic book caliber, heavily edge chipped, with numerous fold lines mended with browning scotch tape, it bears testament to the longevity and beauty of parchment and rag fiber paper. At the same time, one of the loveliest (#460) was printed in Baltimore in the early 1950s, a handsome production featuring machine-printed side-by-side English and Hebrew texts and elegant color borders.

Ketubbah have of course proven a gold mine of information for historical researchers and others. This gentile also pleads

ignorance about their collectability, having never handled an example. Clearly the earlier, pre-printing press examples pictured are especially handsome productions, and I can only surmise that like illuminated manuscript leaves there is a robust collector's market for early examples and that they do enter the marketplace.

I expected to see a sizeable quantity of ketubbah from Spain in particular, which had a rich Jewish history before the 15th century expulsion. Finally I found but one example, small vellum fragments from the Navarra region of northern Spain dated 1433. Sabar's detailed analysis informs that "Not many ketubbot have survived from the Iberian Peninsula of the Middle Ages." Perhaps Spain's zealous expulsion included widespread, methodical destruction of Jewish documents of any type.

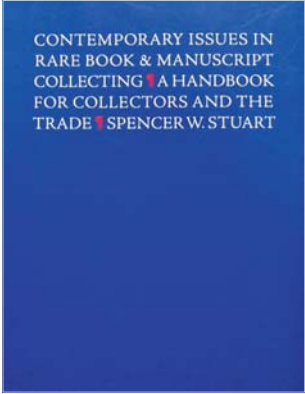
Anyone who finds the rich imagery of Renaissance tapestries and medieval illuminated manuscripts appealing, who enjoys art of all types for its sheer beauty, will delight in *The Art of the Ketubbah: Marriage Contracts from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary*. And its richness goes far beyond the aesthetic appeal, which Sabar's elucidation of the religious, and historical and cultural significance of each specific ketubbot brings out.

The vast majority of autograph and book collectors, it seems to me, approach their hobby *informally*. That's not to say they aren't serious about it or well organized or highly knowledgeable in their collecting field – just that part of the joy they find in collecting is its spontaneity. Such collectors enjoy seeing their collection grow organically and serendipitously, sometimes changing shape and heading off in unexpected directions or morphing into something entirely different. It's an intuitive, instinctive approach. To overanalyze and choreograph this process feels like – well, compare it to explaining the punchline of a joke. It defeats the purpose and takes the funny out of it. For the same reason this type of collector prefers, quite intentionally, *not* to articulate their collecting motives and goals.

Those who prefer to analyze, strategize, chart and plan the direction of their collecting, on the other hand, may find Spencer Stuart's *Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting: A Handbook for Collectors and the Trade* just the thing. It's a title that works best for those who need a bit of reassuring hand holding, as it were – those in the early stages of collecting who may need to learn how to *think* about their collecting and its purpose – something they may not yet have put a finger on. "Objects endure," he writes, but "their position within your collection will be brief." He goes on:

As a custodian of them, it is your obligation to document their place within the unique constellation your collection provides, preparing them to enter back into the outside world. Interesting collections tell us something about the collector as much as they do about the objects. Such transference can only be achieved by spending time with your collection and seriously considering the objects within it. Few things in life allow one to connect with objects on a personal and intellectual level quite like collecting.

Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting: A Handbook for Collectors and the Trade is collections advisor Spencer Stuart's take on the future of rare book and manuscript collecting and the new directions it may take. My initial reaction is that it is Upper East Side in its attitude and seeks to appeal to that sliver of the collecting clientele. Interesting? Yes. Thought provoking? I suppose so. Perhaps it's because Stuart is a relative newcomer to the rare book and manuscript world with a background in art history and the New York auction scene, positioning himself in the narrow



CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN
RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT
COLLECTING: A HANDBOOK
FOR COLLECTORS AND THE
TRADE ■ SPENCER W. STUART

field of collections advisor, but I find the approach a bit jargon-foreword in a dense academic way, with words capitalized here and there for no apparent reason except to add *gravitas*.

Stuart writes in the preface, “Entering the 21st century there was the refrain within the Trade about collecting that ‘there are no more collectors’, ‘they do not collect like they use to’, ‘younger generations have no sense of history’, ‘no one reads books’.” [sic] Well... no, not really. There’s nothing new about these complaints, which most generations make against younger generations. There have always been grumblers and malcontents expressing such sentiments – generally older dealers who compare the current collecting climate with that of decades ago and are unwilling or unable to change with the times. Humans are, after all, prone to taking their specific experience and applying it broadly – to paint huge strokes with an enormous brush on a vast canvas. Such dinosaurs generally go the way of the dinosaur, and refrains heard today show that there are indeed still collectors aplenty and that collecting areas and reading habits have simply altered somewhat – as they always have and always will – but are still there. Stuart, with his Manhattan auction house mindset, continues:

Young cataloguers [I assume he means himself] who started in the Trade looked to Auction Houses equipped with infrastructure and management open to innovation (not to mention new consigners and bidders). The impasse between collectors and the Trade began to get by-passed in the traditional collecting categories by the increased dominance of Auction Houses. Parallel to their crossovers, third-party aggregators and a demographic with fluency in the Networked Society were drawn to the practice of collecting spurred on by ambassadors in the Trade, Auction Houses and broader popular culture....

Am I the only one who feels like I’m listening to Kendall Roy from television’s *Succession* ? Roy’s rapid-fire buzzword-heavy dialogue leaves me thinking: Are we speaking the same

language? Do we live on the same planet?

Studying any book's table of contents, as noted earlier in my review of *The Art of the Ketubbah*, is a process remarkably instructive but often overlooked. Its basic function is a map to a book's organization, but it also reveals much about a book's approach and attitudes. "Collecting and Collections Life Cycles," "Emerging as a Collector" and "Post Pandemic Structural Change in the Auction Business" sound like the lingo of a wealth fund manager with their Wall Street phraseology. There's nothing wrong with that, but as one immersed in the arts and humanities, in collecting driven by intuition and passion and love of history, it simply does not resonate. I confess that language such as "Synaptic connections will cease with ad hoc acquisitions resulting in a loss of plot and focus" is doublespeak that makes my eyes cross.

Stuart is most successful in part six of his nine parts, "Profiles from the Rare Book and Manuscript Trade." Strange and interesting interviews with "Iceland's Last Rare Bookstore," with New York music producer Johan Kugelberg, with my ABAA colleague James Cummins and his son Jim, and with six European antiquarian booksellers (Anthony Payne of London, Marcus Benz of Zurich, Jörn Günther and Timur Yüksel of Basel, and Thor Gunnar Ness and Rolf Warendorph of Oslo) offer a welcome respite. It's always pleasurable and instructive when other dealers chat about their start in the trade, what works for them and their ideas on the future of rare books and manuscripts.

With an aggressive \$100 price sticker, *Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting* may not appeal to the casual collector, but those who like an approach that I find clinical and jargon-laden, who want their collection conceptualized and managed, may accept this kind of cover charge. Certain collectors who feel they are flailing about without aim or purpose may find instructive reassurance in *Contemporary Issues*. Newcomers in particular sometimes want to feel they're not squandering their time and resources, that there's meaning and value to their avocation. *Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting* may just deliver that.

Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting has a bit of an identity crisis, for its subtitle *A Handbook for Collectors and the Trade* I find a bit of a misnomer. “Handbook” sets up expectations of a guidebook or manual, which it simply isn’t. “Thoughts,” “advice,” “suggestions,” “reflections” and similar would more accurately reflect Stuart’s *opinions* on trends and directions in rare book and manuscript collecting. Call it hair-splitting, but to me a handbook should be as factual as possible, filled with very specific and very concrete plans on how to accomplish certain tasks. The word is better suited to the physical than the theoretical, and Stuart’s book is focused more on the latter than the former. The lack of an index, too, hints that *Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting* is not truly a “handbook.”

Every dealer who toils all day every day, year in year out, in this eccentric trade of ours – yours truly since the 1980s – will have strong opinions on the issues facing book and autograph collectors. Often there’s not even agreement on what those issues are. While Stuart is not a dealer and may not have been in this field very long, *Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting* is a valid expression of one person’s point of view.

It takes moxie to publish one’s opinions and suggestions, and I admire Spencer for doing so. I may not agree with some of his advice and feel that many in “the Trade” referred to in his title will agree with me. But his opinions are neither better nor worse than mine – just different. I’m reminded of one of my favorite Abraham Lincoln quotes – one that certainly did not come from our sixteenth president, but rather from the pen of one of his favorite humorists, “Artemus Ward” (actually Charles Farrar Browne). “For people who like that kind of thing, that is the kind of thing they like.” *Contemporary Issues in Rare Book & Manuscript Collecting* often represents New York auction house attitudes with which I differ, but I’m pleased to have it on my reference shelves.