

HENRY HILLS—PIRATE

Henry Hills was a London bookseller who, in the year 1708, began to issue a series of badly-printed penny or twopenny pamphlets most of which were "pirated" from works strictly belonging to other booksellers. The Copyright Act effectively put a stop to these activities, but by the time its effect was felt in 1710, he had pirated over 100 poems, an even larger number of sermons, and a few other prose pieces (mainly "rogue" literature). Although the Copyright Act prevented Hills from openly pirating other men's property, it did not forbid the sale of the pamphlets already in print. So, when Hills died a year or two later, his stock was put up for sale (it was advertised in *The Evening Post* 12th November 1713) and passed into other hands. A man called T. Warner gained possession of the verse pamphlets and reissued them in two volumes (each containing about 30 different pamphlets) with a title-page reading *A Collection of the Best English Poetry* 1717.

There are only five copies of this collected edition known. The most important one is in Newberry Library, Chicago, and others are to be found in the British Museum, the Houghton Library (Harvard), and the New York Public Library. Only one volume of the copy at Yale University Library has survived. These five copies are very important for the story of Hills's piratical activities, for they tell us which pamphlets were still in stock at his death. But if we require information about earlier editions of these pamphlets, and even of the pamphlets that were sold out before Warner bought the stock, we must search elsewhere. Fortunately, there are a number of booklists in the pamphlets in Warner's collection, but it would be a long and arduous task to search library catalogues for individual copies of each pamphlet listed. The literary historian would like to find collections of pamphlets made at determinable points in Hills's career which contain all, or at least most, of the pamphlets issued before that point of time. Although I have seen many collections of Hills's pamphlets in English and American libraries, none satisfactorily filled this need. It is therefore of great importance that one of two volumes of Hills's pamphlets now in the Alexander Turnbull Library comes nearest the ideal collection made half-way through Hills's piratical career. A collection in the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, small though it is, helps to fill the gaps in the Turnbull volume. The Brotherton volume consists of ten pamphlets