



### Hesketh Pearson Collection

Hesketh Pearson (1887 – 1964) was born in Hawford, Worcestershire, England, and after working in a shipping office, he turned to a theatrical career in 1911. He joined the army during World War I, fighting in Mesopotamia and Persia from 1914 to 1918. After the war, he returned to the stage as both actor and director. He began a writing career in 1921 with the publication of *Modern Men and Mummies* which contained amusing portraits of his contemporaries in the theater. He continued to research and write popular biographies of famous literary and artistic figures. His posthumous autobiography, *Hesketh Pearson, by Himself* appeared in 1965 (Eng P3615Z).

This collection of Hesketh Pearson manuscripts consists of the holograph notebooks he kept for several of his biographies as well as some miscellaneous research notebooks. All are contained in bound, ruled notebooks, written in pencil with work dates and word counts recorded by Pearson. The McCormick Library has cataloged the proof copies for each book, and call numbers for these are given in the guide below. The collection was donated by a Chicago bookseller in 1981.

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#### Box 1

[Miscellaneous notebooks.] 1 vol. 20 cm.; 3 vols. 25 cm. [n.d.] Holograph ms.

Notes taken from various secondary sources in preparation for biographies.

*Sydney Smith*. 4 vols. 20 cm. February 20 – July 11, 1933. Holograph ms.

Proof copy: Pearson, H. *The Smith of Smiths*. . . London [1934] Eng P3615s

*Dickens; his character, comedy, and career*. 7 vols. 20 cm. August 4, 1947 – August 31, 1948. Holograph ms.

Proof copy: Pearson, H. *Dickens; his character*. . . London, 1949. Eng P3615d

*Dizzy; the life and nature of Benjamin Disraeli*. 5 vols. 20 cm. June 17, 1949 – December 7, 1950. Holograph ms.

Proof copy: Pearson, H. *Dizzy; the life*. . . London, 1951. Eng P3615di

#### Box 2

*Walter Scott; his life and personality*. 7 vols. 20 cm. July 1, 1953 – February 3, 1954. Holograph ms.

Proof copy: Pearson, H. *Walter Scott*. . . London, 1954. Eng P3615w

*Sir Herbert Tree; his life and laughter*. 5 vols. 23 cm. November 7, 1954 – April 21,

1955. Holograph ms.

Proof copy: Pearson, H. *Beerbohm Tree; his life and laughter*. London, 1956.  
Eng P3615b  
*Johnson and Boswell*. 4 vols. 20 cm. December 7, 1956 – January 27, 1958.  
Holograph ms.  
Proof copy: Pearson, H. *Johnson and Boswell*. London, 1958. Eng P3615j

Box 3

*Merry Monarch; the life and likeness of King Charles II*. 3 vols. 23 cm.  
May 10, 1958 – February 2, 1959. Holograph ms. For additional notes,  
see misc. notebooks.  
Proof copy: Pearson, H. *Charles II—His Life and Likeness*. London, 1960.  
Eng P3615c  
*The Pilgrim Daughters (some marrying Americans)*. 3 vols. 23 cm. April 14 –  
August 21, 1960. Holograph ms. For additional notes, see misc. notebooks.  
Proof copy: Pearson, H. *The Pilgrim Daughters*. London, 1961. Eng P3615p  
*Lives of the Wits*. 4 vols. 23 cm. January 24 – September 9, 1961. Holograph ms.  
For additional notes, see misc. notebooks  
Proof copy: Pearson, H. *The Lives of the Wits*. London, 1962. Eng P3615l  
*Henry of Navarre; his life*. 2 vols. 23 cm. July 21 – November 11, 1962.  
Holograph ms.  
Proof copy: Pearson, H. *Henry of Navarre*. London, 1963. Eng P3615h