

noisseurs.¹ The recent sale, writes Mr. Burns, of the Cist collection of signers, always counted among the complete sets extant, disclosed the fact, that the autographs of Hart and Taylor were not of the right men.

The progress of forming sets of the signers has been slow from the start. It took from 1815 to well on towards 1835, for Dr. Sprague to complete his first collection; and till 1837 before Dr. Raffles succeeded in procuring the last of his fifty-six autographs. In 1845, we judge, Mr. Gilmor completed his set; and others probably not very long thereafter.

In August, 1870, Mr. Burns enumerated fourteen sets of the signers, namely: Dr. Raffles', Dr. Sprague's two sets, New York State Library's, A. W. Griswold's, Dr. Emmet's, Col. Myers', Mr. Chamberlain's, Mrs. Allen's, Prof. Leffingwell's, Mr. Dreer's, Mr. Davis', Mr. Mickley's, and Mr. Cist's. The Griswold set, now Mr. Drexel's, was then incomplete, and the Mickley and Cist collections have since been dispersed. In November, 1870, Mr. Burns announced two others as complete—Dr. J. I. Cohen's, and Dr. Sprague's third set.

Mr. Sabin, in January, 1871, placed the numbers of sets then in existence at seventeen, without naming them—"some of which," he added, "are very weak in specimens, and perfect in completeness only." It is quite certain that there were not so many complete sets at that day; some that were so reckoned, doubtless lacked one or more specimens; and some, then incomplete, have since been dispersed, going to improve and complete others. As late as 1876, Mr. Brotherhead gave a list of seventeen persons in this country engaged in making collections of autographs of the signers; of these, however, four never completed their sets, and two were dispersed.

When the first edition of Brotherhead's *Book of the Signers* appeared, in 1861, reference was made in a notice of the work in the *Philadelphia Press*, to Queen Victoria's collection, "which we have seen in the private library at Windsor Castle," etc. The well-known author, Theodore Martin, made inquiries regarding this pretended set, and

¹ Burns' *American Antiquarian*, Aug., 1870.