Spent 22 Years Collecting 15,000 Similes
Frank J. Wilstach's Ardent and Relentless Hunt for This Elusive Figure of Speech Results in a Remarkable Collection

By June Kellett

The story of how a man who never wrote a line of verse or a single book, but who has been described as "a collector of phrases," has accumulated nearly 15,000 similes is as fascinating as the phrases themselves. The man is Frank J. Wilstach, a New York Times correspondent who has spent 22 years gathering similes from all parts of the world, from the ancient classics to the latest comic books.

"During all the years that I have been a writer on the staff of the Times I have never had a desire to rush a story," Wilstach said. "I always tried to do it right, to make it as clear as possible." This attitude, he said, is what helped him become a simpliciter.

He started collecting similes in 1894, when he was a reporter for the Times. Since then, he has collected similes from all parts of the world, from the ancient classics to the latest comic books. He has collected similes from the works of Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Milton, and from the works of contemporary authors.

"I have collected similes from all parts of the world," he said. "From the works of Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Milton, and from the works of contemporary authors." He has even collected similes from the works of contemporary authors.

Wilstach's collection of similes is so vast that he has been referred to as "the man who knows simile." He has been described as "a collector of phrases," and he has been quoted as saying, "I have collected similes from all parts of the world, from the ancient classics to the latest comic books."