

SUB-60-LETTER PANGRAMMATIC WINDOWS

MIKE KEITH

Richmond, Virginia

The November 2005 *Kickshaws* reported the discovery by Dave Moore of a 61-letter pangrammatic window (contiguous string of letters in a published text that contains every letter of the alphabet at least once) in Bret Harte's *Flip: A California Romance*. Although reported as a new record, that discovery just ties the 61-letter example found in 2004 by Dan Tilque in *The Detroit News* and mentioned in *Word Ways* at the time – though it is nearly undeniable that the Bret Harte example is of higher quality, as the *Detroit News* window contains proper names as well as two numerals, whereas the Harte example has no proper nouns or extraneous characters.

Inspired by these discoveries I mounted a renewed attack on the Project Gutenberg archive of literary texts (www.gutenberg.org). About five years ago I computer-searched essentially all the texts then in Project Gutenberg without even finding one example as good as the famous 65-letter window in *The Beth Book*, but in five years the number of texts in the Project Gutenberg archive has roughly quintupled, so I hoped that another search might unearth a new record.

In all I searched about 14,000 texts containing a total of 8,000,000,000 letters. Four new record pangrammatic windows were found, all having fewer than 60 letters. From longest to shortest:

Richard Burton, *The Land of Midian*, 1879 58 letters

Boxes Nos. 3 and 6: **Black quartz and white quartz from the Jebel el-Abyaz, gave no results except** a small portion of copper pyrites in a lump of quartz.

Marie Corelli, *Temporal Power: a Study in Supremacy*, 1902 57 letters

“It is not because a few stock-jobbers rule the Press and the Cabinet, that the State is necessarily corrupt. Remove the corruptors, – sweep the dirt from the house – and the State will be clean.”

“**It will require a very long broom!**” said Paul Zouche. “**Take David Jost, for example...**”

C. N. Williamson and A. M. Williamson, *It Happened in Egypt*, 1914 57 letters

At the mention of his name, the oft-seen picture rose before my eyes – a big man, anywhere between thirty-six and fifty – good head, large forehead, curly hair, kind eyes, pugnacious nose, conceited smile under waxed **moustache, heavy jaw, unconquerable chin, and prize-fighter's neck** and shoulders.

Lillie de Hagermann-Lindencrone, *In The Courts of Memory*, 1912 56 letters

“Ha, ha!” he cried, with a certain sarcasm. “By all means let us have that,” and sat down before the piano while I spread out the music before him. I sang, and thought I sang **very well; but he just looked up into my face with a very quizzical expression**, and said, “How long have you been singing, Mademoiselle?”