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The Ruskin Manuscripts

BY WILLARD THORP

NO Victorian, apparently, ever destroyed a scrap of paper on which he had written a line, nor would he have considered it decent to burn the correspondence of his family and friends. We, living in a puny literary age, when the epic poem of our time, The Waste Land, runs to only twenty pages, marvel at what a Kingsley or a Reade could turn out before the days of lady typists and dictaphones. Our admiration increases when we stop to realize that the Victorians read as much as they wrote; that their novels came in the three-decker format and their biographies sometimes extended themselves to seven volumes.

If the scholar in the Victorian field, embarrassed by his riches, sometimes wishes he were a student of a remote period of which time has winnowed the manuscript records, he can be happy in the realization that, since so much was written and preserved, there is more to go around. Poor indeed is the college library which cannot afford to own what Professor Howard Lowry described in Princeton recently as “one of those innumerable Victorian letters in which someone is always inviting someone else to lunch.”

Of all the Victorian giants none wrote and published more than John Ruskin. The excellent Library Edition of his works, edited by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (1903-1912), fills thirty-nine fat quarto volumes and occupies more space on the library shelves than that required for the work of any other Victorian writer. In preparing this edition, which is one of the most thorough and complete of any modern
use the collection can know what they will find at Princeton. At the same time I shall not attempt a bare and rigid bibliographical description. This will hardly be possible until a longer study of the manuscripts has been made. There are still many pages among them which defy the student to say what they are or for what work they were intended. The titles of the manuscripts as given here are those stamped on the bindings. I have noted the approximate dates of writing when these could be ascertained.

EARLY GEOLOGY

Geology and natural science generally were Ruskin's first enthusiasm. He once said that no acquisition of later years, not even his Turners or his missals, gave him so much pleasure as his first box of minerals. All his life he worked at scientific subjects and was immensely proud of his learning in this field. Before he was in his teens he had begun to compile a dictionary of minerals.

The manuscript, 43 folios closely written on both sides of gray foolscap, is such a compilation, describing various ores and metals. Seven pages are charmingly illustrated with pen and ink drawings.

POEMS (1830)

Like all precocious boys with a literary bent Ruskin scribbled verses almost as soon as he could write. His mother and father, pleased at this sign of genius, encouraged him and kept all his effusions. Twelve manuscripts of his early poems exist, nine of which, if I judge accurately from the descriptions sent me, are now at Yale. Princeton possesses one of the twelve, consisting of 38 folios, written on both sides of the sheet. It is a rough-copy book, begun in 1830 (when Ruskin was eleven years old) and containing first drafts of poems copied into other books and a story entitled "Macbeth." It served Ruskin till September or October 1831. In 1838 he used it again to make a copy of his "Essay on the Comparative Advantages of Music and Painting."

EARLY PROSE WRITINGS (1835-1838)

While the Ruskin family made its leisurely continental tours, young John wrote and sketched steadily in his diaries,
training himself to record all he saw, with a precision which would later be one of his chief assets as an art critic. But no romantic boy could be content with merely describing the monastery of St. Bernard. Moved by the mystery of the pass and the hospice, he planned and began to write a series of stories in the style of "Monk" Lewis, to be called "Chronicles of St. Bernard." Only "A night at L'Hospice" and part of the first story were completed. The nine folios they fill are now in Princeton, bound with his "Essay on the relative dignity of the studies of painting and music and on the advantages to be derived from their pursuit" (5 folios).

In Praeterita Ruskin says that this ambitious undertaking was begun to confute the arguments of Miss Charlotte Withers, "an altogether sweet and delicate woman" whom Ruskin's mother had invited to Herne Hill in 1838. Ruskin (who was really fond of music) contends impressively that painting is the nobler art and defeats his feminine opponent with a shocking false analogy: "Serpents will dance in time, elephants have been taught to perform elegant and graceful pas suis; but I never heard of even that most sagacious animal having ever become an admirer of Raphael, or a connoisseur of the works of Correggio... The power therefore of enjoying music, being common to brutes must be considered inferior to the capability of appreciating painting, which is peculiar to him who was made after the image of God."

SAMUEL PROUT (1844 and 1879)

Samuel Prout (1783-1852) was an English painter and etcher with considerable skill at rendering architectural detail. He had drunk the excellent wines provided at the Ruskin table and his works were among the first drawings young John had seen. In 1879 Ruskin arranged a loan exhibition of his works and wrote a delightfully sympathetic catalogue for it.

The manuscript consists of a letter written by Ruskin to Prout in 1844 and a first draft of the introduction to the Notes by Mr. Ruskin on Samuel Prout and William Hunt, Illustrated by A Loan Collection of Drawings Exhibited at the Fine Art Society's Galleries (1880).

The letter one may almost call naive. Ruskin praises Prout for the realistic effects he secures, but tells him, in substance, that his methods are illegitimate. So much false drawing should not be capable of producing an illusion of truth! This letter should be a warning to all professors inclined to lecture the practitioners of an art.

ESSAY ON BAPTISM (1850)

In his Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds (which is by no means the utilitarian piece of writing the title indicates) Ruskin did not have space to consider one of the issues allied to the problems of church organization with which the Notes were concerned. This problem is baptismal regeneration, a question agitating the Church of England at the moment because of the attempt (1847-1850) of the High Church party to exclude from the establishment a benefited clergyman, the Rev. G. C. Gorham, who was suspected of Calvinistic views on the sacrament of baptism. Though Ruskin evidently wrote this supplementary essay with great care, as the Princeton manuscript shows, he never published it. Possibly his reason can be deduced from a note he made on the wrapper which once enclosed the manuscript: "I kept to see that I wrote worse once than now." Cook and Wedderburn printed the Essay, for the first time, in their Library Edition, XII, 573-589.

LECTURES ON FLORENTINE & GREEK ART &c (1869-1870)

All the items in this collection of fragments are connected, in one way or another, with the series of Oxford lectures on the Elements of Sculpture" delivered in Michaelmas Term, 1870, and published in 1872 as Ara Tr Pelcali. The sixth lecture, as delivered, was the "School of Florence," but Ruskin did not publish this with the others in 1872. Three manuscripts of the lecture exist, from one of which Cook and Wedderburn first published it (XX, 355-367). The copy they used is not the one in 29 folios now at Princeton.

The next 25 folios are labelled "Lectures 13 The School of Florence." The sheets are in great confusion, and so far as I can discover no excerpts from them have been printed. Of the remaining 28 folios the most interesting are portions of two lectures which Ruskin never completed, but which he intended should be numbers four and six in a series to be read in the spring term. The first of these two fragments is called
MORNINGS IN FLORENCE (1875-1877)

Art historians who shudder at the name of Ruskin not only forget that, almost single-handed, he created their profession but also that he gave them an audience. How many thousands of eager tourists have proudly carried the red leatherette volumes of his Mornings in Florence into Sante Croce and the Spanish Chapel and strained their eyes and their necks to see everything which he notes as worthy of examination?

Mornings in Florence, the Victorian equivalent of the histories of Mather and Berenson, appeared in parts from 1875-1877. The Princeton manuscript labelled “Mornings in Florence” contains, actually, very little which found its way into the completed book. The proofs of Caird’s “The Visible Church” which constituted the Seventh Morning are pasted on twelve folios. The rest of the manuscripts consists mainly of scraps of notes, some evidently made by Caird. A fairly complete essay entitled “The Baptistry of Florence” fills five folios. So far as I can discover this has not been printed.

ST. MARK’S REST (1876-1877)

St. Mark’s Rest, written during Ruskin’s sojourn in Venice in 1876-1877 and published in parts beginning in April 1877, is a companion volume of Mornings in Florence. Our manuscript contains only one portion of Chapter X (“The Shrine of the Slaves”) and one folio of the eighth chapter (“The Requiem”). But to compensate for what we do not have are ten manuscript fragments on Venetian subjects, closely related to the printed chapters of the book and all considered worthy of publication by Cook and Wedderburn (XXIV). These fragments—of projected chapters or appendices—have such engaging titles as “Super Leonem et Aspidem,” “The Magpie’s Nest,” “The Grottesque and Harlequin Ape.” At the end of the manuscript are four sheets of note paper labelled “Preface” which tell of Ruskin’s first visits to Venice. Did he, perhaps, originally intend this for the preface to St. Mark’s Rest in place of the present rather staid introduction? I cannot discover that it has been printed.

DEUGALION

This manuscript defies description. It is the fattest in the whole collection (229 folios) and needs the loving labor of
some mineralogist to decipher. The two volumes of Ruskin's writing called Deucalion are in themselves a hodge-podge. Actually they are not a continuous piece of writing at all but a collection of his scientific papers, dating from various periods of his life, and brought together under the title of Deucalion. Ruskin made some rather ludicrous efforts to give the book a semblance of unity; as for example in his retitling his lecture on snakes "Living Waters." The largest part of the manuscript consists of geological and mineralogical notes; twenty-eight folios, for instance, constitute a catalogue of some cabinet of minerals similar to those collections which Ruskin made and proudly presented to various schools and institutions. Among the decipherable portions of the manuscript are the proof sheets of the Grammar of Silica (XXVI, 533-541), the manuscript of a portion of On Banded and Brecciated Concretions, first published 1867-1870 (XXVI, 64-71), the manuscript of "The Garnets," intended originally as a part of Modern Painters (XXVI, 575-576). Of considerable interest are the corrected proof sheets headed "Chapter X Bruma Iners." This chapter was projected as a continuation of Deucalion but was not printed by Ruskin (XXVI, 363-365).  

STORM CLOUD OF THE NINTH CENTURY (1886)

Ruskin was frequently piqued because professional scientists did not take his scientific essays seriously. In February 1884 he delivered two lectures at the London Institution on the effect of industrial smoke and gases on the English atmosphere. Some of his conclusions were ridiculed but he was able to confound his critics for he had been keeping careful observations of the weather for fifty years and possessed date which a good scientist was bound to respect. The Princeton manuscript consists of the proof sheets of the first lecture. It is elaborately revised and affords students an opportunity to examine Ruskin's changes and additions in the proof stage.  

A KNIGHT'S FAITH (1885)

Ruskin felt the need of a cheap library of classics which might go into the humblest homes. As early as 1864 he was meditating a scheme for one; in letter 61 of Fors Clavigera he lists the books which he hoped to prepare for it. The four volumes of the Bibliotheca Pastorum which were issued between 1876 and 1885 seem odd choices for reading by the masses, but one must admit that they are Ruskinian choices: The Economist of Xenophon; Rock Honeycomb; Broken Pieces of Sir Philip Sidney's Faltier; Elements of English Proseody; A Knight's Faith; Passages in the Life of Sir Herbert Edwardes. Ruskin had lectured to his neighbors at Coniston on the chivalric achievements of Edwardes, a hero of the Indian service and Ruskin's friend. A Knight's Faith is largely a retelling of Edwardes' A Year on the Punjabi Frontier, with interpolations by Ruskin. Our manuscript contains portions of Ruskin's rificamento in various stages from schemes for the chapters to revised page proofs.  

OUR FATHERS HAVE TOLD US (1886-1885) AND VALLE CRUCIS (1882)

One of the last projects which Ruskin conceived was a series of studies of Christian history and architecture in which the culture of Amiens, Verona, Rome, Pisa, Florence, England and other parts of the western world was to be reviewed under the grand title "Our Fathers Have Told Us." Only one division of the work, The Bible of Amiens, was issued (1880-1885), but these two Princeton manuscripts contain preliminary studies which Ruskin made. These are notes for the section on Rome and the Papal power, to be called Ar Coeli, for the church in Rome with which he had romantic associations, and even five sheets of proof for this section, showing at what an early stage in his work Ruskin called in the printer. The "Valle Crucis" manuscript is of great interest. This section, to have been number six in the scheme, was assigned to England. The first two chapters were set up in type and worked over but never completed. Chapters three and four, on Cistercian Architecture, had been used as a lecture under the title "Mending the Sieve." The manuscript (36 folios) bound up with the incomplete material for "Valle Crucis," is a confused heap of recopied passages, revised sheets, and inserted leaves, but the whole matter is here.  

THE NOTE BOOKS

The six note books now at Princeton will fascinate architects and students of the history of art. Two of them were evidently
carried in Ruskin’s pocket when he was meditating The Seven Lamps of Architecture. They are packed with architectural drawings in pencil, pen and ink, and water color. The notes which surround them refer, among other places, to Bayeux, Rouen, Coutances and Lisieux. Another small album of thirty-three pages is likewise strewn with architectural sketches, but further enlivened with delightful little thumbnail drawings of people and scenes by the way. There is some reason to believe that one end of the album was used in 1845, the other in 1849. A fourth book contains lists, I gather, of the drawings and paintings which Ruskin deposited in the drawing school at Oxford for the use of his students. The titles as they appear here, are rather less dignified than those in the printed catalogue. Let me take a few at random: 7 My best crab; 152 My Lion; 156 My Egyptian Lion; 81 My old griffin; 82 My new [griffin]. A fifth book was used only to make pencil drawings of a kite and an eagle. The sixth contains six drawings, with color added, of mountain scenery. And over the page—just at the moment when I had begun to feel that Ruskin wrote and drew too much and that these Victorians should have owned more capacious waste-baskets—I came on this refreshing poem, which escaped the possessive eye of Messrs. Cook and Wedderburn:

_Di me, I am sure that this delicate mince_
_Had been chosen, and chopped and prepared upon Prince-
_esses known to good housekeepers sixty years since_
_And I feel that the Princess and likewise the Prince_
_Of Wales would extreme satisfaction receive,
_If—you with a word to our dear Mr. Singleton,
_You sent them the system its sauce has been mingled on._

If we don’t know what porridge had John Keats, we now know what mincemeat had John Ruskin.
Special Collections at Princeton

II. THE LEBRUN COLLECTION OF MONTAIGNE

BY IMBIE BUFFUM

The hobbies of distinguished men are often more revealing than their professions. It is significant to note how often Montaigne has exerted a lifelong fascination on such men. Although the Essays are notorious for their attacks on the science of medicine, paradoxically the author of them has many of his most devoted friends among doctors. Physicians are perhaps attracted by the powers of experimental self-analysis shown by this famous invalid of the Renaissance. The hobbies of architects, however, are no less interesting than those of doctors, and it is to an architect that the Princeton Library must feel especially indebted for its collection of Montaigne.

Mr. Pierre Le Brun was, until his death in 1924, a leader of his profession in America. He designed many of New York's most important buildings. The reader is undoubtedly familiar with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Building in Madison Square. Its tower, inspired to Mr. Le Brun by the campanile of St. Mark's in Venice, has long been a landmark of the Manhattan skyline. But Mr. Le Brun did not rest content with his own successes. He wished to provide promising younger men with the opportunity of rising in the profession. Many famous architects of the present day will remember him with gratitude as the founder of the first traveling scholarships established in this country to permit young architects to study abroad. In spite of the fact that his example has been widely imitated, so that now many such funds exist, the Le Brun Traveling Scholarships remain perhaps the outstanding honors of their kind.

Mr. Le Brun, who was born and lived all his life in America, never forgot his French heritage, and so became attracted to that writer whom Sainte-Beuve has called the wisest Frenchman who ever existed. In this sixteenth century philosopher Mr. Le Brun found a never-failing food for his inner life. If the New York architect had lived three hundred and fifty years
earlier, Michel de Montaigne might have discovered that friend he longed for, when missing La Boétie, he wrote:

"If there be any body, or any good company in the country, in the city, in France, or anywhere else, resident or travelling, that likes of my conceits, or whose humors are pleasing to me, they need but hold up their hand, or whistle in their fiste, and I will store them with Essays, of pithe and substance, with might and maine."

Being separated by time from his friend, this architect wanted to honor his memory by assembling the greatest Montaigne collection in America. For years he attended literary auctions here and abroad, buying rare editions from the sixteenth century to the present, and numerous critical works. His great love of Montaigne made his enthusiasm spread to other writers of the Renaissance, and so he extended his library to include Rabelais. It is this great collection which Princeton is now proud indeed to own. We are all the more proud that Princeton should have been chosen to receive these books, since Mr. Le Brun himself had no connection with the University. The Library is deeply grateful to Mrs. Le Brun who, in 1925, gave these treasures, and so made it possible for Princeton to become a centre of Montaigne studies.

The value of this collection would be difficult to over-estimate, for it contains copies of all the extremely rare editions of the Essays which appeared during Montaigne's lifetime. This is a matter of more than purely bibliographical interest, since Montaigne kept adding to his work at each publication, so that we are able to study the evolution of his thought over a period of years. When the Essays first appeared, in 1580, they consisted of the first two books only. This edition, published by Simon Millanges at Bordeaux, in two small octavo volumes, is the most precious item in the entire collection. The Princeton copy, bound in red morocco, is unusual in that it has three title pages, one of which omits the honorary titles after Montaigne's name. These first two books are somewhat less personal than the third book, which appeared later; to a greater extent than in after years, Montaigne confines himself to comments on the ideas expressed by his favorite Latin authors. He hoped to attain the heights of stoical wisdom which these men had attained: the Essays of 1850 may be said to represent the author's attempt to conquer his nature. He then thought that the good life consisted of rigorous self-discipline and courageous meditation on death. The early essays bear such titles as "That to philosophie is to learn how to die" and "To avoid voluptuousness in regard of life." This edition also shows us another aspect of Montaigne's thought, and one with which his name is almost always linked: scepticism (the famous "Que sais-je?"). The longest of all the essays, entitled, "Apologie de Raymond de Sebond," attempts to show, with numerous homely illustrations, the limits of human knowledge. The conclusion of this famous treatise may be surprising to those who know its author only by reputation: "Man shall raise himself up, if it please God extraordinarily to lend him His hand."

The 1582 edition, brought out after Montaigne's long trip to Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, still consists of two books only, but has a few interesting sentences added here and there, relating to his travels. A more extensive account of this journey is found in his travel diary, which is interesting because Montaigne kept it for his personal use only, and never intended it to be published. The Journal de Voyage was lost for nearly two hundred years, and rediscovered by accident in 1774, when a historian in search of documents happened to be going through some old papers in a chest in Montaigne's castle. The work was published that same year in Paris and Rome simultaneously; there is a copy of this first edition in the Le Brun collection. Montaigne reveals himself a far more intelligent traveler than most Americans of the present day, for he constantly tries to avoid his fellow-countrymen and to adapt himself to foreign customs. This diary, which has been neglected by scholars up to the present, provides confirmation for many statements occurring in the Essays.

We also have the 1587 edition of the Essays (the first one printed in Paris) and the 1588 edition, noteworthy for the first appearance of Book III, and numerous additional books. Our copy of the latter, a single large quarto volume, has marginalia, written, as far as the style of handwriting permits us to judge, by a contemporary, and indicating many of the classical sources of the text. The annotator has so thorough a knowledge of sources that he may possibly have known
Montaigne personally. In this 1588 edition we begin to see the easy-going philosophy of the mature Montaigne. Here, ceasing to feel the need of overcoming his personal inclinations, he tells us many more intimate details of his life, and arrives at the conclusion that virtue is the cheerful enjoyment of one's own individual being. In his last essay, "Of Experience" he sums up this new point of view:

"It is an absolute perfection, and as it were divine, for a man to know how to enjoy his being loyally. . . . The best and most commendable lives, and best pleasing men are (in my conceit) those which with order are fitted and with decorum are ranged to the common mouth and humane model: but without wonder or extravagancy." Needless to say, this is a rather dangerous philosophy, and has been interpreted dangerously by certain people, including a famous modern novelist; but in the majority of cases, it proves to be a healthy and sane point of view.

As long as Montaigne lived, he continued to enlarge his work by scribbling additions in the margins of his personal copies. Even when his opinions had changed, he never erased what he had written earlier. Just as, in regard to the actions of his life, he disapproved of repentance, so he was unwilling to repudiate any of his former writings. Naturally, with the years the Essays increased greatly in size, as we can clearly see by a glance at the early editions in the Le Brun collection. The editions of the Essays published by the modernists such as Gounay, that old maid who conceived a wholly platonic but slightly ridiculous infatuation for him, incorporate these marginal notes. And so, in our 1593 copy of the Essays, we can follow still further the trend of Montaigne's thought.

Modern critical editions usually indicate these successive enlargements by some system of letters or numbers; here in Princeton we have the opportunity of seeing without trouble the exact state of Montaigne's mind in several different years. This is especially useful if one wishes to study the man's earlier thought, because in many cases the 1580 essays are, by the time of Montaigne's death, peppered with contradictory statements added when he changed his mind. The collection is not, however, deficient in modern critical editions, although it lacks the important one given by Strowski on the basis of the

Exemplaire de Bordeaux and crowned by the French Academy. Pierre Villey's excellent edition, which is represented in the collection, is probably the best to date. This great scholar was, until his tragic death in a railroad accident near Cenon a few years ago, the world authority on Montaigne. The quality of the devotion often inspired by Montaigne may be seen in Villey's courage. For the last years of his life, he was totally blind; but despite this handicap, he painstakingly completed his monumental work, indispensable to all Montaigne scholars, Les Sources et l'Évolution des Essais de Montaigne.

The difficulty of interpreting Montaigne's thought has, in many cases, given rise to heated arguments. Every reader of the Essays has tended to see in them some of his own cherished beliefs, and has tried to make Montaigne in his own image. This is one of the reasons why the Essays have provoked a never-ending stream of critical writings. Some of these quarrels have resulted in angry exchanges of pamphlets. Doctor Armaingaud, for example, insists that Montaigne was all his life an epicurean, whereas Mr. Strowski is sure that he underwent a stoical period first. Mr. Le Brun, who bought a large number of these brochures, has enabled us to see exactly what Dr. Armaingaud thought of Mr. Strowski and vice-versa.

A fund, established by the generosity of Mrs. Le Brun, allows us to enlarge the collection from time to time with any new works on Montaigne which may appear. Last year, for example, there were published such important studies as Ricardo Sáenz Hayes' Miguel de Montaigne and Maturin D'Irano's La Pensee religieuse de Montaigne. The latter discusses an aspect of the essayist which had hitherto been largely overlooked, for scholars have been all too willing to accept Pascal's estimate of him as a thoroughly irreligious man.

The Le Brun collection has been divided into three parts. The ordinary every day books are placed in the stacks, where they are available to all students. The rarer items in the collection are exhibited in cases near the reserve desk; any duly authorized person may obtain permission to look at them. Finally, the priceless early editions published during Montaigne's lifetime are kept in the Treasure Room.

The influence of Montaigne on his readers is usually of so deeply human a nature that they are particularly anxious to
communicate their enthusiasm to others. If Mr. Le Brun were living to see his great collection established at Princeton, where it continues to win new friends for Montaigne, he could not fail to be pleased. He would feel, along with many others, that in an age so characterized by turmoil and fanaticism as ours, Michel de Montaigne has a special message of serenity and tolerance.

The Boydell Shakspeare

AN ENGLISH MONUMENT TO GRAPHIC ARTS

BY LAWRENCE THOMPSON

Our present anniversary vantage-point, which now leads us to look back with pride over the innumerable mountain-peaks of accomplishment in the history of the book since the invention of printing, five hundred years ago, may serve as a fitting time for recalling the curious and startling facts which surrounded the publication of the "Boydell Shakspeare." Can any other publishing enterprise during those notable five hundred years match the spectacular pretentiousness, the elaborate preparation, the ambitious and altruistic motives, the lavish spending of thousands of Pounds, the enlisting of so many different artists as illustrators and engravers, the building of a separate art gallery to house the original canvases, a separate printing establishment, a special type-designing firm, and finally a national lottery to bring the project through to solvency and triumph? B. Burnett Carson '25, who recently deposited in the Treasure Room the nine large volumes of the "Boydell Shakspeare," sumptuously bound in full red morocco with gold tooing, has enabled us to use the edition as a keystone in an exhibition of "Shakespeare Illustrated (1709-1940)" and has led us to supplement it with the Boydell copperplate proofs and prints already in our library. Here follows the narrative of events which transpired in London from 1786 to 1805, the beginning and end of Boydell's bold undertaking.

The story begins around a dinner table in the home of Mr. Josiah Boydell, at West End, Hampstead, in the fall of 1786. Among the ten notables there gathered were some of the outstanding figures of the day in art, literature, printing, and publishing—Benjamin West, the painter, who had left America many years earlier in search of an environment more congenial to him than his native land; George Romney, friend of West, whose phenomenal success as a portrait painter had not eclipsed his earlier interest in realistic historical painting; William Hayley, at the height of literary popularity following the six-year-old success of his poem entitled The Triumphs of Temper; George Nicol, bookseller to George III and an inde-
fatigable idealist who wished to raise to an art those crafts of
type-founding, ink-making, and printing, which had lost
ground since the days of William Caslon and John Baskerville;
and John Boydell, the host's uncle, who had amassed a large
fortune as a printer and publisher while spreading abroad
the fame of English engravers and painters.

Nobody could be sure, afterwards, just how the subject had
taken shape. Romney felt that he had been responsible for it;
Nicol was certain that he had proposed the publication of "a
national edition of Shakspere, ornamented with designs by
the first artists." We may easily imagine that Romney, West,
and John Boydell (then an Alderman, and three years later
Mayor of London), were grappling with their favorite subject
of stimulating the growth of an English School of Historical
Painting; that Nicol would be elaborating some new proposal
for a successful publishing venture. Only John Boydell, power-
ful, wealthy, and influential, could ever have swept these two
ideas into the vortex of his own imagination with enough
courage to follow the plan to actuality. The Boydells were
shrewd business men, but they were also zealous in their public-
spiritedness. They felt that they had already helped to estab-
lish an English School of Engraving—and truly they had.
Then why should they not carry out a design which would
have as its object the establishment of an English School of
Historical Painting? The works of Shakspere, so many of
them based on English history, furnished a field at once unified
and patriotic. If all the best artists in England would devote
themselves to a series of paintings from scenes in Shakspere,
and if these paintings were translated into handsome engrav-
ings, and published with pages of text that were models of
typographical beauty . . .

Boydell's purse really began the project. His commissions to
thirty-three English painters were accompanied with promised
honourariums higher than any offered before in England.
Within three years, the paintings began to appear. Some of the
canvases were small, some were enormously large. What
should be done with them? Build a gallery; invite the people
to behold and worship. In 1789, the Shakspere Gallery was
completed "On the site of Mr. Dodson's house" in Pall Mall,
and the people thronged to see what English artists had done
to translate Shakespeare's scenes from words to canvas. Month by month, new paintings were added—by Romney, Reynolds, West, Opie, Northcote and others—until the Gallery contained 170 pictures, representing the work of thirty-three different artists.

"The public were enamoured of the undertaking," says Dibden, whom we have reason to trust this time, "and encouraged, by liberal subscriptions, the perpetuity of such art by means of the 

It was when up started Heath, and Hall, and Sharpe, &c. and the whole machinery was put in motion at once uniform and productive." One of the first and most generous subscribers was King George III, who had already taken so much interest in the graphic arts that Boydell was able to count on his patronage. As the orders came from England, Europe, and America, the work of the painters and engravers continued; the large folio proofs and prints were published separately, from 1789 to the completion of the work and offered for sale at the Shakespeare Gallery. When the set of large copperplate engravings was finished, there were in all one hundred separate prints, uniform in size, and measuring 20 x 27 inches. This enterprise was merely an adjunct or supplement to the main purpose—the publication of The Dramatic Works of Shakespeare edited by George Steevens, with smaller copperplate illustrations. And so the engravers began to recut the scenes on smaller plates before the series of larger plates was completed.

Perhaps the imagination plays with most interest around the smaller plate cut, after a painting by Opie, to illustrate "Romeo and Juliet," Act IV, Scene V, where the Capulets discover Juliet apparently dead. As early as 1791, the large copperplate had been cut by G. S. and I. G. Facius; and a smaller plate was issued separately in 1792, engraved by J. P. Simon. But Simon's work was unsatisfactory—it seems like a slovenly and lazy simplification of Opie. In characteristic fashion, Boydell insisted that the smaller plate be recut. And as it occurs, together with Simon's print, in the Princeton copy (Volume IX, p. 101), it is dated March 25, 1799, and signed by the engraver, "W. Blake." Geoffrey Keynes, in his Bibliography of William Blake, lists this plate as it occurred in a separate publication of the smaller plates, without text, in
1803; but does not note that it was also used with the text in the nine-volume edition of the *Dramatic Works*. One may easily suppose that Blake's friendship with William Hayley explains his participation in the Boydell enterprise; and perhaps if Hayley and Blake had known each other earlier, Blake might have done many other plates, for his execution is a spirited and faithful rendering of the larger engraving.

The most interesting part of the story remains to be told. The problems of printing the text of Shakespeare had been entrusted to George Nicol, whose attention to superior presswork had won him prominence as bookseller to the King, five years earlier. Fortunately, he was still considering the best method of carrying on the magnificent enterprise introduced him to a Scotch typographer and printer, William Bulmer, born and brought up in Newcastle on Tyne, where he had developed a warm friendship with the wood engravers Thomas and John Bewick. Bulmer was only about thirty years old when Nicol found him, but he had already been printing for John Bell, whose 108 volumes of "The British Poets," had attracted wide attention, with their clean pages of type, engraved title pages, and illustrations after designs by Stothard, Mortimer, and others.

Nicol found that Bulmer had ideas and contacts which might well be harnessed to the Boydell project. In a few months, Bulmer was established in premises in Cleveland Row, St. James, as the "head of the Shakespeare Printing-Office." Furthermore, it was decided that a new type-face should be designed and cut for the "National Edition of Shakspeare," as it came to be called, and Nicol hired William Martin, another Scotsman, from Birmingham, to begin making designs immediately. Nicol, in his enthusiasm, took young Martin into his own home for seven years and there gave him space "to cut sets of types after approved models in imitation of the sharp and fine letter used by the French and Italian printers"—Didot and Bodoni. Martin's Roman and Italic types actually seem more closely related to Baskerville's, although they have their own individualities.

To make the printing process thoroughly original required only one final touch—the preparation of a special ink. Without ostentation, Nicol even did that. William Martin's brother Robert, who had been Baskerville's old foreman in Birmingham, sent Nicol the material from which a pure black ink was made from a recipe probably similar to Baskerville's. Thus, when Nicol, in his Advertisement to the "National Edition of Shakspeare," described his endeavors, he was able to write with justifiable pride: "With regard to the Typographical part of the work, the state of printing, in England, when it was first undertaken, was such that it was found necessary to establish a printing-house on purpose to print the work; a foundery to cast the types; and even a manufactory to make the ink. How much the art of printing has improved since that period the Public can best judge."

Gradually, the various parts were integrated: artists continued their painting, engravers tried to keep up with the artists, Bulmer began to take proofs of Martin's types—and the public grew impatient. Within three years after the famous dinner, the first prospectus was published; *A Catalogue of the Collection of Pictures in the Shakespeare Gallery*, with a Preface by John Boydell, dated May 1, 1789. After describing the scope and purpose of the project—and commending himself (somewhat too warmly) to the public as a servant of painting, engraving, English prestige, progress, and big business—Boydell tried to calm the impatient subscribers:

"I must again express my hopes, that the Subscribers will be satisfied with the progress made in this arduous undertaking, for it is to be considered "as the works of genius cannot be hurried on, like the operations of a manufactory, and that Engraving, in particular, is a work of very slow and laborious progress. . . . Every exertion will be made, consistent with that excellence which is aimed at, to publish the first Number with all possible speed;—after that, the work will go on, uninterrupted.""

Before the year was over, the first "number"—of which there were to be eighteen to complete the nine volumes—made its appearance, containing the smaller sized copperplates and the text for "Richard III" and "Much Ado About Nothing." The other seventeen parts continued to make their appearance, about two each year, until the work was completed, in 1802. The original price for these nine volumes was 37
Pounds, 16 Shillings, according to Lowndes. Because of the tremendous expense involved, the price was too cheap. Josiah Boydell, writing in 1805, admitted that some of the single prints in the collection had been secured at a total cost (for the painting, the engraving, and the printing) of 1,500 Guineas. The cost of the paintings and drawings was given as 42,266 Pounds; of the Shakspeare Gallery, 30,000 Pounds; of the copperplates, 300,000 Pounds.

The support of private benefactors and public subscribers would have justified such an investment in prosperous times. But long before the work was completed, England had begun to feel the effects of the French Revolution, and John Boydell, counting on European sales which stopped suddenly, was faced with bankruptcy. To avoid such a consequence, he made application to Parliament, on February 4, 1804, asking for permission to clear himself from debt by a lottery, the objects being the Shakspeare Gallery, all the paintings therein, the copperplates, and the prints. In explaining his situation, the eighty-five-year-old publisher wrote,

"The Gallery I once flattered myself with being able to leave to that generous Public, who have for so long a period encouraged my undertakings; but unfortunately for all those connected with the fine Arts, a Vandalic Revolution has arisen, which, in convulsing all Europe, has entirely extinguished, except in this happy Island, all those who had the taste or the power to promote the fine Arts; while the Tyrant, that at present governs France, tells that believing and besotted nation, that, in the midst of all his robbery and rapine, he is a great patron and promoter of the fine Arts; just as if those arts, that humanise and polish mankind, could be promoted by such means, and by such a man."

Permission was granted, and before December 1804, the entire issue of 22,000 tickets had been sold. With money thus obtained, Boydell paid his debts promptly, but before the lottery was drawn, he had died. The drawing took place on January 28, 1805, the main prizewinner being a Mr. Tassie, who sold the Boydell property at public auction through Christie's. Although the auction aroused considerable discussion and interest, the canvases, some of them so large as to be unwieldy for any use outside a gallery, brought disappointingly low prices and were scattered.

Thereafter, the Shakespeare Printing-Office, which Boydell and Nicol had helped to create, carried on under Bulmer's guidance for many years. Renewing his early friendship with Thomas and John Bewick, Bulmer gave to their strong and graceful wood engravings the style of typography which they needed, and produced some of Bewick's most attractive books —such as the Poems by Goldsmith and Farquhar and the companion volume, Somerville's Cheese. The Reverend T. F. Dibden, whose many books were printed by Bulmer and published by Nicol, included in his Bibliographical Decameron (Volume II, pp. 384-395) an incomplete list of "Books Printed at the Shakspeare Press", from 1790 to 1817, with pictures of Bulmer and Nicol. In his best panegyric fashion, Dibden sang of the Boydell Shakspeare,

"This magnificent work, which is worthy of the unrivalled compositions of our great Dramatic Bard, will remain, as long as these compositions shall be admired, an honourable testimony of the taste and skill of the individuals who planned and conducted it to its completion. No work of equal magnitude (I speak of the typographical part) ever presented such complete accuracy and uniform excellence of execution. There is scarcely one perceptible shade of variation, from the first page of the first volume to the very last page of the work; either in the colour of the ink, the hue of the paper, or the clearness and sharpness of the type."

Truly the work is a monument, and yet it is as unwieldy as a monument. The spacious pages and the pleasing double pica (22 point) Roman and Italic type might have led Dibden to call out his favorite word; to say that it was "comfortable" to the eye; but he could never have claimed that these heavy folios, with their heavy rag paper, their extra-heavy plate paper, and their solid covers bound with leather, might fit comfortably into the hand or lap! Nevertheless, that cautious appraiser, D. B. Updike, has kind words to say, in his Printing Types about the work of Bulmer and Nicol:

"Whatever may be the opinion of the light, open types and widely spaced and leade'd pages of volumes by the best printers in these last years of the eighteenth century, they seem to me
to be very sincere and workmanlike solutions of problems which the printer worked out in the manner of that time. Such books were part of the life about them. They accorded admirably with the cool, sedate interiors in which they were housed. It was printing faithful to the best standards of its day, and because of this I think it will live."

**Biblia**

**DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE FRIENDS OF THE PRINCETON LIBRARY**

*Volume XI, Number 2*  
*February, 1940*

The Princeton University Library Chronicle is now well launched. Copies of the first number were mailed to upwards of one thousand members of the Friends in November and several commendatory letters have been received. We are now very definitely convinced that the Chronicle will serve a most useful purpose for the Friends and for the Princeton University Library.

Subscriptions are being received from other libraries and from individuals who are not members of the Friends. The list of subscribers is growing slowly and it is to be hoped that by next June, when Volume One will be completed, with an index, we shall have a substantial list. A publication of this sort certainly is worthy of sufficient subscribers to make it self-supporting. Material projected for future numbers will continue to make it decidedly worth owning.

**THE CELTIC RENAISSANCE**

The literary renaissance which took place in Ireland during the latter part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries involved the work of several important and interesting writers. This significant movement has been most ably covered by Ernest Boyd in his Ireland's Literary Renaissance,
and also by George Moore in his famous trilogy, *Hail and Farewell*. The outstanding figures were John Millington Synge, William Butler Yeats, and George William Russell, better known under his pseudonym A. E.

The Princeton Library has a fair representation of authors of this renaissance, but it has been felt that our collection should be made more comprehensive. The matter was taken up with Francis H. Payne '91, who has been so very generous for the past years in giving us much needed help in the field of poetry of the Victorian period. Mr. Payne kindly agreed to let us use his contributions for Irish authors. The plan was then broached to Mr. E. Byrne Hackett, of the Brick Row Book Shop, who has a personal interest in the Celtic renaissance as well as a splendid feeling and knowledge for it because of personal contacts with some of the participants. Mr. Hackett, it was found, had a fine collection of material in this field. He sent a complete check list, reasonably priced. Our first order, which used up money available from Mr. Payne's contributions brought us several titles by A. E. and by Yeats. We then ordered out of a special fund practically all the titles needed to complete the publications of the Cuala Press, which was the very heart of the whole movement. There are a great many more items offered by Mr. Hackett that we hope to be able to acquire.

**THE EMERGENCY FUND**

When the last appeal was mailed to the Friends, two collections which the Library wished to purchase were mentioned. One of them, dealing with the history of the theatre has been secured. This contained a remarkable collection of playbills, scrap books of clippings, and portraits, and helped to make the William Seymour Theatre Collection much more comprehensive. The balance of the money contributed is almost sufficient to cover the purchase of the collection of books on Italian folk-lore, the second group mentioned in the appeal for the Fund. That collection is so good that it is most unwise to delay action any longer. Fortunately, the Library is able to make up the shortage out of other funds and so negotiations for the acquisition of this collection will be started at once. The books are in Rome, and as soon as they are received at Princeton, a report will be made.

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Emergency Fund has been enlarged by additional contributions, received since November, from the following Friends: Marcus L. Aaron '20, Archibald S. Alexander '28, James Boyd '10, James H. Caldwell '98, Jasper E. Crane '01, R. Jay Flick '94, John W. Garrett '95, P. S. Havens '25, John B. Heyl '14, Richard W. Lloyd '28, Breckinridge Long '03, S. Sterling McMillan '29, George W. Perkins '17, Howard F. Taylor '08, and John L. B. Williams '14.

The total received from this group is $442.00. This figure, together with the amount reported in the November 1939 *Chronicle*, makes a total of $1285.00 received on the Emergency Fund for the expenditure of books.

Henrietta G. Ricketts very thoughtfully made a contribution towards publication expenses.

Francis H. Payne '91 made an additional contribution, which was used for purchases in the Celtic Renaissance.

**GIFTS**

Lack of sufficient space precludes the proper description of several gifts of books and other items received from Friends during the past few months. Many of these gifts have formed splendid additions to our collections and we wish to thank once more all the generous and thoughtful donors. In singling out a few we mention: from William B. Bamford '00, *Ait Quatuor Coronatorium*, volumes 13 to 49, a valuable and exceedingly interesting periodical of Masonic origin and devoted in a great measure to architectural and historical research, together with several volumes on Masonry, engineering and architecture; from Edwin S. Ford '13 sixty-three volumes of nineteenth century fiction and three volumes of Father Fa- cilique, R. P. dealing with the Micmac language; from Wallace E. Meyers '13 a collection of 119 volumes on history, literature, economics and sport, as well as seven French posters issued during the last war; from Sterling Morton '06 a collection of interesting material, mostly in pamphlet form, dealing with current problems; from J. Harlin O'Connell '14 a letter dated March 7, 1844, signed by President Tyler, referring to an accident which occurred on board the U.S.S. Princeton on February 28, 1844, accompanied by a letter from the U.S.
Navy Department, dated October 25, 1939, giving further information regarding the events referred to in President Tyler’s letter, together with a manuscript poem by John Drinkwater, a signed copy of Quiller-Couch’s A Fowey Garland and a translation of the old miracle play Guibour; from Henry N. Paul ’84 further additions to our Shakespeare collection, consisting of 25 volumes relating to Shakespeare; from Francis W. Roudebusch ’22 an autograph letter signed by Johannes Brahms, Heidelberg, July 1855; and from Stuart R. Stevenson ’18 the letter from President Tyler already mentioned, presented jointly with J. Harlin O’Connell ’14.

Pieces of propaganda on the war, sent in response to the notice in the Alumni Weekly, have been received from the following Friends: Jasper E. Crane ’01, Alexander R. Fordeyce, Jr. ’96, and George McCracken ’26.


Library Notes & Queries
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PRINCETON

AFew weeks ago, one of our favorite English book dealers listed in his catalogue: “Wordsworth, William. Peter Bell. First edition.” An order went out and in due time a nice pamphlet came through the blockade. Before it was catalogued, some one glanced inside and found the following:

And tears are thick with Peter Bell
Tet still he sees one blessed tomb;
Tow’r’d it he creeps with spectacles,
And bending on his leather knees,
He reads the Lakeside Poet’s doom.

The letters printed are by fate,
The death they say was suicide;
He reads—“Here lies W. W.
Who never more till trouble you, trouble you.”

Now that seemed a bit too fantastic—even for one of Wordsworth’s lapses. Further investigation showed that we had accidentally acquired what Shelley labelled “the ante-natal Peter”—John Hamilton Reynolds’s travesty, inspired by the pre-publication advertisements of Wordsworth’s Peter Bell, and issued anonymously before the real Peter Bell appeared in 1819. Princeton already owned a copy of this pleasantry and the catalogue card describes it as “A burlesque anticipation.” So back to the English dealer went his copy. All this shows merely that first-rate dealers sometimes do not get beyond title pages. It also calls attention to a gap which still exists in our Wordsworth collection.

In passing, we might remind the reader of those oft-quoted lines in the genuine Peter Bell which begin and end thus: “Is it a party in a parlour... All silent and all damn’d!” The stanza which includes these lines disappeared after the first
edition because Wordsworth felt that the profanity had given offense to some "over-scrupulous person"; perhaps the same person whose criticism kept this same poem out of its intended place in Lyrical Ballads, 1798.

Some years ago, Dr. Gerould, planned and began a bibliography of the works of President Jonathan Edwards—presenting many and varied problems. At Dr. Gerould's retirement from the Librarianship, the work was carried on by Dr. Thomas Johnson, of the Lawrenceville faculty, already known for his work in early American literature. He has now turned over the manuscript to the University Press. This volume will be, in more ways than one, a contribution of first rank to Princetoniana, as well as a valuable addition to bibliography. Somewhere in it you will find the phrase "Publication of the Princeton University Library."

The Reference Librarian wants to find time to complete his bibliography of the works of and works on Paul Elmer More. This will be a small pamphlet if ever is finished, but the question is—where are the spare moments?

Apropos of bibliographies, we mentioned in the last issue that a work had just appeared, by Wilfred G. Partington on T. J. Wise: Forging Ahead. Perhaps as a tardy comment on this book we could include part of a note left on our desk by one who had been a friend of Wise: "I've read this with great interest. I think it clinches the case against Wise, but it is a spiteful piece of work, unworthy of a man who at one time was on intimate terms with W."

Some one may be interested to know whether we can still buy books from Europe. At the moment the situation is this: English and French periodicals and book orders are coming in fairly well, slower, of course than usual. Our German dealer accepts orders but is no longer trying to ship. Our chief dealer for other countries sends an occasional shipment. All this is subject to the activity of U-boats, pocket cruisers, mine sweepers and bombing planes. And one result is that we are buying heavily of American material.

We like to settle teasing problems which have been worrying people for weeks and months. A loyal Friend (and Neighbor) recently told us a sad story and asked for help. She had done her best to determine the original source of a favorite Latin quotation which she had treasured in her memory for years: "In omnibus requiem quaesuis et non inveni, nisi seorsum sedans in angulo cum libello." ("Everywhere I sought rest and found it not, except sitting apart in a nook with a book.") Then, while reading Gissing's The Reapergoft, she found it quoted and identified as "that sentence from the Imitatio of St. Thomas à Kempis." But when she searched the scriptures of the Imitatio, lo! it was not to be found. As though to increase her bewilderment, she found in Egerton Castle's book on Bookplates, this version: "In omnibus rebus requiem quaesuis, sed non inveni nisi in noxibus und boekins," with the comment, "A motto attributed to Saint Francis de Sales—the old dog Latin (!!) 'noexins und boeksins' is the original form of the sentence." Who was right? Where did the passage first occur?

The answer seems to be that Thomas à Kempis actually did write it—as an inscription in a copy of his De Imitatione Christi. The account of his writing it was first given by Rosweyd in his Preface to the 1617 edition of De Imitatione Christi. The Latin sentence is also used as an inscription under a painting of Thomas à Kempis, in Zwoll, Holland, where he is buried. Happy as we are to settle this point, the credit goes to Steven- son's Home Book of Quotations.

A nice question came in the other day. The city fathers of a municipality not a thousand miles away apparently realized that they were on the point of missing a chance for a celebration—or perhaps had missed by a year. The original charter had been granted by the King in February 1739. Should they celebrate the 200th anniversary in 1940, or had they missed out by a year? New England did not adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1752, when Parliament dropped eleven or twelve days, and also shifted New Year's day from March 25 to January 1. Every time this o.s. or n.s. question comes up, we have to work it out afresh, and as this time a whole city was waiting, we went into 4th dimensional thinking with the aid of numerous books—then telephoned to the Astronomy Department. After serious consultation, the vote was to allow the city to do its celebrating.

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The next issue of the Chronicle will contain an article on Alexander Anderson, the first white-line wood engraver in America. His Bewick-like cuts served as familiar and often felicitous decorations in hundreds of books issued by American publishers from 1795 to 1850. Anderson was the purveyor of a new order of book-illustration in a barren age before American book illustration had any other respectable tradition. Curiously, however, no serious attempt has ever been made to list the extent of his work. A checklist is now being compiled at Princeton and it is our hope to publish it in pamphlet form in connection with an exhibition of Anderson’s work, scheduled for appearance in the Treasure Room in April. The price of the checklist, which will include short-title descriptions of over three hundred separate books, together with general descriptions of Anderson’s serial-work for organizations such as the American Tract Society, will be $1.50. The checklist will be printed only if the orders which accumulate before March 15 justify the undertaking. In case you have never noticed Anderson’s characteristic “A” tucked quietly into his engravings, we here give a sample which he engraved after an original by Bewick.