



T H E F L Y L E A F

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NEXT MEETING OF THE FRIENDS:

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 8 P.M., FONDREN LIBRARY

Mr. Paul A. Underwood will give an illustrated lecture on "Recent Work of the Byzantine Institute on the Mosaics in Constantinople."

Mr. Underwood, a graduate of Princeton, is now Associate Professor of Byzantine Art and Archaeology at Harvard University, Dunbarton Oaks, and Washington. Since 1950 he has also been Field Director of the Byzantine Institute in Boston.

He will illustrate his lecture with special 3" x 4" color slides made last summer and never shown before. The lecture is open to the public and is sponsored jointly by the Friends and the Museum of Fine Arts of Houston.

LOOK AT THE IMPRINT

From the bibliographical point of view the imprint at the bottom of the title-page is the key item in a book. Usually, though not always, it enables the student to identify the edition by establishing when and where, and frequently for whom and by whom, the book was published. A book lacking the title-page is of course hopelessly defaced, and loses a large part of its value for the collector. This is not merely an arbitrary insistence on a collector's point; it derives partly, though not entirely, from the fact that the loss of the imprint is irreparable.

It is part of one's bibliographical education to look at imprints closely. Experience shows that when people start to look at imprints they are most likely to have their attention caught by the date. And if the date is early, say before 1800, or if the date or other information establishes the copy as a first edition, the inexperienced owner is likely to jump to the conclusion that he is the possessor of a unique treasure, to be marketed with great caution and at a staggering price. This is not often the case, although one never can tell, and if you happen to have a copy of Poe's Tamerlane and Other Poems, Boston, 1827, we should like to invite your attention yet again to the pleasures and privileges of being a Friend of the Fondren Library. Without committing ourselves to the ridiculous idea that old books merely as old books have high value, we should like to point out that imprints can be very interesting evidence.

For example, there is a fruitful field for study in early American imprints. We take it as a matter of course now that most American books will show some great publishing center in the imprint. But American imprints in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, bear the names of innumerable towns in the East where local printers functioned in a small way as publishers -- for example, Suffield, Cooperstown, Brookfield, Newburyport, Worcester, Newport, Hallowell. -- Again, in the eighteenth-century field, a non-committal imprint such as "London: Printed for the Booksellers. 1728." may mean that we have here to do with a pirated edition, an evasion of copyright, and may thus give interesting evidence about publishing history. The possibilities are numerous and various. Look at the imprint. Let us add that it is not always easy to interpret an imprint completely, but if you have any that arouse your curiosity, we should be glad to see them.

DESIDERATA, Or, The Infinite Extensibility of Human Wants

There is a feebly facetious parody of Goldsmith:

Man wants but little here below,
But wants that little strong.

From the point of view of this department, the second line comes closer to being true than the first. It is a little difficult to find a logical order for our wants, but we may begin with Americana.

We have a chance to get in Paris a very important bibliography, Charles Leclerc, Bibliotheca Americana, "Catalogue raisonné d'une très précieuse collection de livres anciens et modernes sur l'Amérique et les Philippines," Paris, 1867, 1878 -- \$75.00. The American Branch of the Oxford University Press has just published Jean Lipman, American Folk Decoration, at about \$9.00. Of special Western and Texan interest is a collection of seven drawings by Charles M. Russell, gathered and published by Carl Hertzog at El Paso, under the general title, History of Transportation in the Early West, with an essay by J. Frank Dobie, and an additional drawing by Tom Lea. We can get this unusual item for \$20.00. In the field of literature we have just acquired two "high spot" firsts in American fiction which we should like to have underwritten: James Fenimore Cooper's The Prairie, 1827, \$15.00, (an American first published in London), and Herman Melville, Pierre, New York, 1852, \$10.00. The last, you will notice is nearing its centenary.

To be underwritten, like the last two American titles, is a first edition of William Godwin, Caleb Williams, which is costing us exactly \$22.57 -- the best novel published in English in the 1790's. A low price for such a rare item.

In the field of medical history, note C. N. B. Carnac, Epoch-Making Contributions to Medicine Surgery, and the Allied Sciences, Philadelphia, 1909, \$20.00 -- not a primary book, but a useful collection. Here also belongs a fine reprint by the Nonesuch Press of The Anatomical Exercises of Dr. William Harvey, edited by the eminent Geoffrey Keynes, the first English text of the two Latin monographs in which Harvey announced his discovery of the circulation of the blood -- \$18.20.

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It is hardly straining a point to put Dr. Thomas Browne of Norwich, of the Religio Medici, under medical history. We can get for \$37.50 the first collected edition of Browne, London, 1686, a handsome folio, containing, if you will allow us to say so, a lot of better prose than is ever written now. To conclude this section, the distinguished work of Dr. Asa Chandler and his students in parasitology lends special point to the listing of Friedrich Kuechenmeister's "monumental treatise on parasitology," Leipzig, 1855, first edition, \$27.50.

We have acquired for \$22.50 the Methode de Nomenclature Chimique of Lavoisier, Morveau, and others, Paris, 1787. In these memoirs, contributed to the French Academy of Science, "the true principles of chemical nomenclature were stated and illustrated," says Muir, the historian of chemistry. "Speaking broadly," comments F. J. Moore, "it is hardly too much to say that it laid the foundation upon which our modern international nomenclature now stands." We should like to have a donor for this choice item.

We are taking an important step to strengthen our holdings by acquiring a complete set, ⁴⁵ volumes, of the publications of the Societe des Anciens Textes Francais -- \$872.00, and well worth the price because of the key position of these medieval French texts for literary, philological, and historical studies. A really valuable acquisition frequently serves the needs of more than one department.

Fine printing: a beautiful little book from the Nonesuch Press, and an item of literary significance, John Donne, Paradoxes and Problems, which will cost us \$10.00; the superb Catalogue Raisonné of Books Printed and Published at the Doves Press, 1900-1916, \$21.00.

An extra-illustrated item: Dugdale's Short View of the Late Troubles in England, 1681, extra-illustrated with about seventy-five contemporary views and portraits -- \$8.80.

Postscript on English first editions: Dickens, Christmas Carol, 1843, \$3.00 (how much would you have guessed?), Dickens, Nicholas Nickleby, 1839, \$4.20, Meredith, Richard Feverel, 3 vols., 1859, \$15.50, Conan Doyle, The Return of Sherlock Holmes, 1905, \$6.00.

RECENT GIFTS

Rice alumni and friends have sent a continuing stream of gift books and periodicals through the Library. Col. Robert E. Cummings, '16, gave the Third U. S. Army, after action report, August 1, 1944 - May 9, 1945, two unusual volumes containing information originally classified as secret and excellent maps and photographs of the activities of General Patton's army, of which he was adjutant. Through the friendship of William H. McCarthy, Jr., '24, of the Rosenbach Company, Mr. R. Esmerian presented three rare and beautifully bound volumes: Tables generales de la hauteur et de la longitude du nonagesime by Leveque, Italy, a poem by Samuel Rogers, and Racing calendar by James Weatherby. Mrs. Hugo Neuhaus, Sr. continued the gift subscription to the microfilm edition of the Christian Science Monitor. The John McKnitt Alexander Chapter, DAR, has presented a 6-year subscription to the DAR Magazine.

Contributions from Friends of the Fondren Library over the \$2.00 supporting membership fee have been used to purchase first editions, rare or beautifully illustrated editions, or current and choice publications which might be out of the Library's reach without a helping hand. Many of these titles have been listed in past issues of The Flyleaf as desiderata: Bibliography of Edwin A. Robinson by Hogan, and Books for Our Time, by Lee, from Melvin N. Aitken; Defoe's Tour thru London...1725 (reprint edition), from Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Arnold; Davidson's Life in America, from Lela Goar Davis; the first edition of Bewick's History of British Birds, from Mr. and Mrs. R. A. J. Lawsen; the eight volumes of Theodore Roosevelt's Letters, from Mr. and Mrs. David Hannah, Jr.; Cundall On bookbindings ancient and modern from Mrs. George A. Hill, Jr.; Thomas Chatterton's Poems, 1st ed. 1777, from Mrs. E. L. Hogan; Das grosse Bruegel-werk from Miss Ima Hogg; Egan's Life in London (Cruikshank illustrations), 1821, from Mrs. Edward W. Kelley; Gray's Poems, 1st collected edition, 1768, from Mrs. Lebbeus C. Kemp; The Shakespeare Head Bronte, 11 v., from Mrs. C. H. Neblett; John Byron's Narrative..., 1768, from Mrs. F. L. Scott; Lehmann-Haupt's Bookbinding in America and Winterich's Primer of book collection, from William L. Tandy; a complete file of transition, 1927-1938, from Mr. and Mrs. Milton Underwood; the first edition of Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Times, 1724, 2v. from Mrs. W. W. Fondren.

Long files of several important late eighteenth and early nineteenth century periodicals on microfilm have been purchased with funds donated by Mrs. W. W. Fondren and Mr. and Mrs. Milton Underwood.

Nearly every old family library contains at least a few choice items. Mr. John Blodgett Davis has given us the pick of several hundred old volumes and from them we have gleaned such desirable books as long runs of Godey's Lady's Book and Peterson's Magazine, both uniformly bound in half leather; the first issue of the first edition of Mark Twain's second book, The Innocents Abroad; and a number of volumes by such once-popular but now neglected authors as Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth. The especial feature of this collection is the excellent condition of the volumes.

Other appreciated gifts were made by G. R. Adams, Carl W. Barkow, A. S. Cramer, Mr. and Mrs. Hardin Craig, Jr., James Karl Dunaway, Mrs. Marie Golding, William V. Houston, Mrs. John S. John, Mr. and Mrs. Carl M. Knapp, Mrs. Ralph D. Looney, Mrs. J. T. McCants, Thomas W. Moore, Dr. Irvin Rosner, Milton Silberstein, James Redding Sims, Helen Putnam Van Sicklen, and Mrs. George Westfeldt.

The Memorial Book Fund, which provides an excellent opportunity for a lasting memorial, has been increased by gifts of funds for the purchase of books in memory of C. C. Blanco from Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Donnelly; in memory of Walter F. Brown from Mrs. Lee Whitcomb, Mr. and Mrs. James L. Whitcomb, and Mr. and Mrs. Radoslav A. Tsanoff; in memory of John Bullington from Mrs. Edward W. Kelley; in memory of Dean Hugh Scott Cameron from Harold E. Mercer; in memory of William S. Cochran from Mr. and Mrs. Perry Olcott; in memory of Mr. M. N. Griffin from Mr. and Mrs. H. Fletcher Brown; in memory of Mrs. Bayard T. Gross from Mr. and Mrs. Alan D. McKillop, and Mrs. Irene D. Wilson;

in memory of M. Frank Hammond from Mr. and Mrs. J. Frank Jungman; in memory of Mrs. Edna Hoffman from Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Jamerson; in memory of Fred W. Huebotter from Mr. and Mrs. J. Frank Jungman; in memory of Mrs. Tharon MacKling from Beatrice Harrison; in memory of David M. Picton, Jr. from Mr. and Mrs. Ray L. Dudley, Elva Kalb Dumas, Mr. and Mrs. David Frame, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Keenan, Mr. and Mrs. Alan D. McKillop, Mr. and Mrs. Carlross Morris, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. Perry Olcott; in memory of Mrs. Luis Rodriguez from Mr. and Mrs. Perry Olcott; in memory of Mrs. George Seaman from Beatrice Harrison; in memory of Lee Whitcomb from Mrs. Edwin Litchfield Turnbull, and Mr. and Mrs. Curtis B. Quarles; in memory of Peter Fondren Underwood from Mrs. Edward W. Kelley.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred V. Shelton donated O'Henry encore, edited by Mary S. Harrell, in memory of William S. Cochran; Mrs. James Chillman, Jr. gave Rand, McNally indexed atlas of the world, 2v. 1895, and Johnson's new illustrated family atlas, 1865 in memory of her mother, Mrs. Helen Fay Dawes; Mr. and Mrs. John Cashman gave Walpole's Essay on modern gardening, 1785, in memory of Mrs. Palmer Hutcheson; Mr. and Mrs. Raymond A. Cook gave volumes 3 and 4 of Freeman's Washington in memory of Lee Whitcomb and Peter Fondren Underwood.

AN ASSOCIATION BOOK

Through the good offices of William McCarthy, a Rice graduate who is now connected with the firm of A. S. W. Rosenbach, a client of that firm, Mr. R. Esmarion, has presented the Fondren Library with a "proof" copy of Samuel Rogers' poem, Italy, London, 1830.

In addition to Rogers' bookplate, this copy has two inscriptions: "To John Ruskin Esqr, with the sincere regard of the Author," and another by Ruskin: "The second of two copies given by the Author to me with his autograph. Given by me, with kind regards, to Arthur Burgess. 1869. J. Ruskin." A copy of Italy presented to Ruskin by Henry Telford in 1832 had determined, in his own words, "the main tenor of my life," by stimulating his interest in Italian art and by giving him his first full introduction to the pictures of Turner. The copy now presented to Fondren can doubtless be associated with the Italian journey of 1869, when Burgess was one of two pupils who accompanied Ruskin to record the monuments of Venice and Verona. We have given a rather full account of this item to illustrate the point that an association copy is not merely a book with some well known name written in it, but ramifies in various ways into biography and literary history.

TAXES

It is perhaps appropriate to remind all of our Friends at a time when they are preparing their tax returns for 1951 that gifts to the Friends of the Fondren Library are deductible. The government of the United States, always willing to help advance the learning of its citizens, has arranged its tax structure so that in certain brackets substantial support for activities like the Fondren Library may be arranged at surprisingly little cost to the benefactor. During the coming year the Librarian will be glad to confer with any Friends who wish to take advantage of these arrangements.

FRIENDS OF THE FONDREN LIBRARY

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