

Syracuse University

SURFACE

The Courier

Libraries

4-1972

Frederic W. Goudy, "Type Man" Extraordinary

Edmund C. Arnold

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/libassoc>

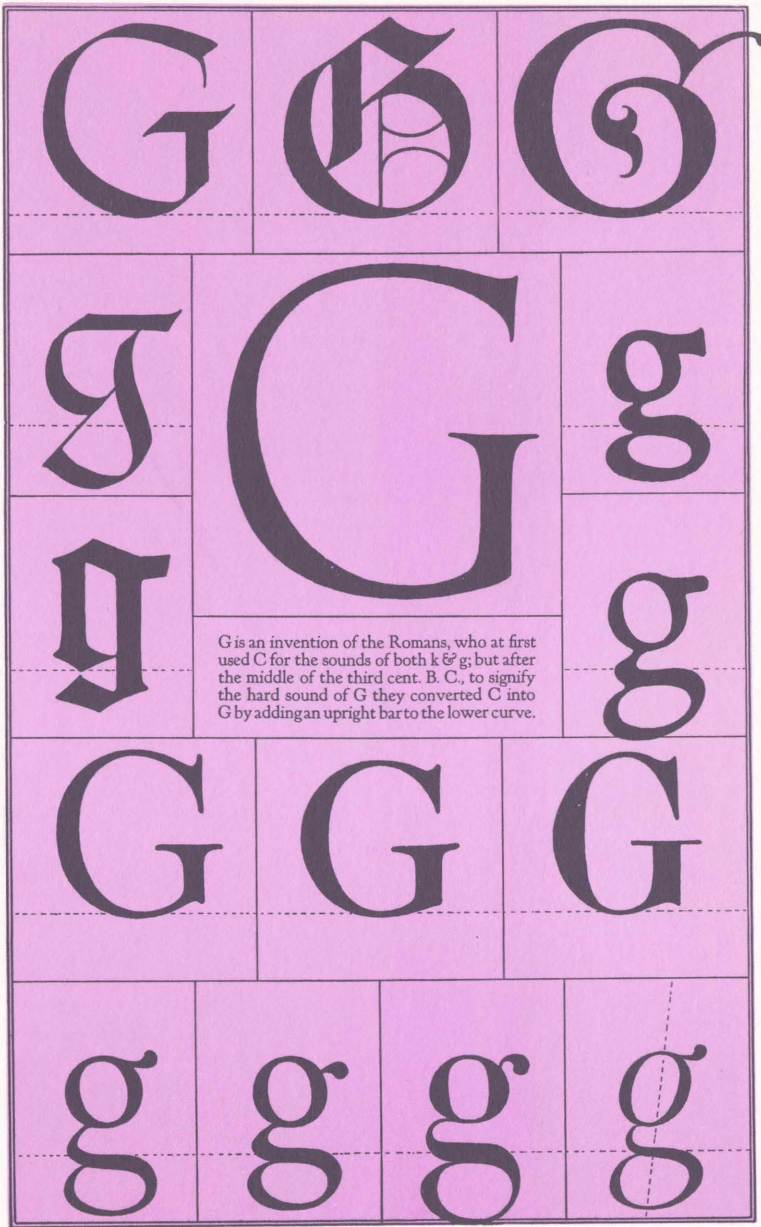


Part of the [American Art and Architecture Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Arnold, Edmund C. "Frederic W. Goudy, 'Type Man' Extraordinary." *The Courier* 9.3 (1972): 3-12.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Libraries at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in *The Courier* by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.



The "G" page from Frederic W. Goudy's *The Alphabet*, 1936.

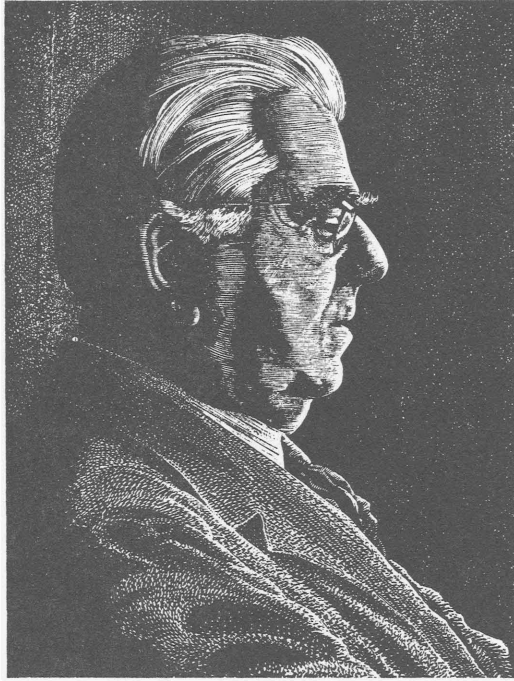
THE COURIER

APRIL, 1972

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Frederic W. Goudy, "Type Man" Extraordinary	
Edmund C. Arnold	3
The Hughenden Papers: Mother Lode of Disraeliana	
Onesime L. Piette	13
The Role of Rare Books in a University Library	
Charles W. Mann	25
The A. E. Coppard Papers at Syracuse	
Arsiné Schmavonian	32
Open for Research . . . Notes on Collections	38
News of the Library and Library Associates	41

The Cover Illustration: The "G" page from Frederic W. Goudy's *The Alphabet*, 1936. Goudy used a whole 9½" x 12½" page in *The Alphabet* to illustrate each of its characters. Not only does this page seem appropriate as the designer's initial, it shows a Latin letterform with the most interesting lowercase. These fifteen g's show not only the wide variety of its forms but how the Goudy style is distinguishable even in designs of widely differing style.



THE STORY OF
FREDERIC W. GOUDY

Written by Peter Beilenson and printed
with a pictorial supplement
for The Distaff Side

1939

His friends consider this an excellent portrait of Goudy. Done by Charles E. Pont, it illustrates an equally affectionate verbal tribute by Peter Beilenson, himself a distinguished New York printer. This was one of an uncounted number of chapbooks about Goudy.

Frederic W. Goudy *"Type Man" Extraordinary*

by Edmund C. Arnold

It was inevitable that the punster should make it "Goudyamus Igitur," for if anyone "went joyfully," it was Frederic W. Goudy, America's foremost type designer. This is probably because it was not until he was forty years old that Goudy found his true life work and he was as full of wonderment and joy about it as would be a mother of that age with a firstborn child. The joy reflects on his readers and his friends; the two usually became one.

If you would share the experience, just browse through the Goudy Collection in the Arents Rare Book Room of Syracuse University Library. Or set a line or two of Goudy type in the typographic laboratory named for him in the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications. The collection consists of more than seventy-five items and thus becomes, along with those at Vassar and the Library of Congress, one of the three most complete in the world.

It is appropriate that Syracuse should have an interest in Goudy. While he never worked here, he would surely have felt at home in the Salt City. For the places where the Goudys (his wife Bertha was an equal in their forty-eight-year graphic arts career) lived and worked were much like Syracuse. They were mid-American, if not in geography then in sturdy tastes, ethics and ideals.

The Goudys started their Village Press in the heartland of Illinois. They brought their grassroots energies and enthusiasms with them to the Massachusetts coast, to the yet-bucolic Brooklyn and Forest Hills, and finally to Deepdene, homely and comfortable as their work, at Marlboro-on-Hudson.

Begun in 1903, the Village Press was the oldest private press in the United States. That was the same year that Goudy designed Village, the first American book face to be cast from freely-drawn originals by a type designer.

Professor Arnold is Chairman of the Graphic Arts and Publishing Departments at the Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. His critical observations regarding the illustrations serve as their captions.

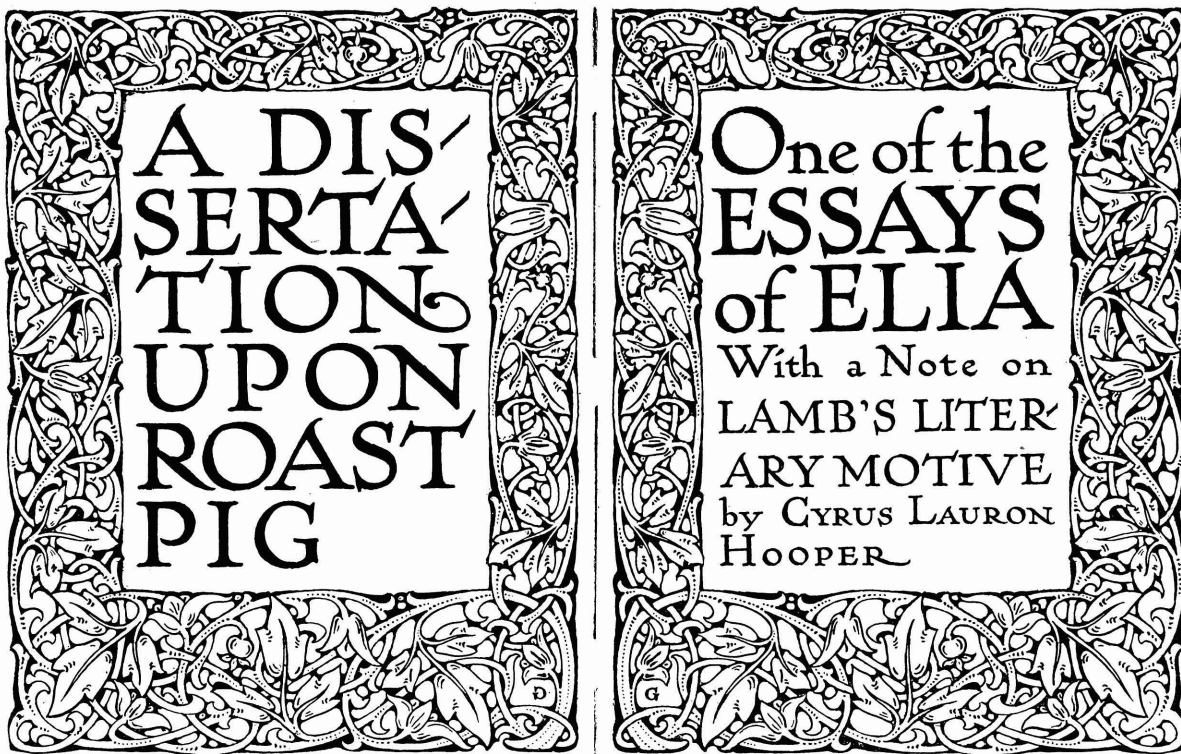
I must confess
I love my Press;
For when I print
I know no stint
Of joy.

Goudy did not say that (it was an observation made in 1861 by Edwin Robbe of the private Rochester Press in England) but it certainly epitomizes Goudy's feelings. Not that he was a Pollyanna sentimentalist; he was a realist. But his basic zeal for life carried him through more tragedy than a normal quota. An adopted daughter died at the age of five; his father's death was a most sorrowful one; not once, but twice, fire destroyed his workshops and their contents; his finances were hardly ever robust; his wife died a dozen years before he did. But he enjoyed his work and his life.

Goudy did come close to Syracuse on countless occasions. Howard Coggeshall, one of America's finest fine printers, operated a renowned printing establishment in Utica and Goudy visited him frequently, as a friend and as a collaborator in the typographic vineyard. It was during this time that he became acquainted with Dean Lyle Spencer, founder of the Syracuse School of Journalism, and it was to Goudy that the School awarded its first Journalism Medal.

It was an interesting oddity that a typographer should thus be honored before any of the other men, mostly writers, who have won the Medal, but the School has always considered typography a vitally important tool of communication. It has always made a basic graphic arts course a requirement for all of the academic sequences in the School. Even today, as typographic standards are eroded by shoddy typewriter "composition" and cold and artless typesetting by the computer, journalism students still set type as Gutenberg and Goudy did. Thus they acquire a sense of the letterforms and an appreciation for their integrity that no other experience can give. And they, too, usually experience a joy in the creation of beauty within the rigid discipline of unyielding typemetal. Goudy gave several fonts of type, both of his own design and that of others that he used at the Village Press, to the journalism laboratory and all are in constant use.

Goudy was a "type man" in every sense. He designed type, more than a hundred faces, to become America's most prolific creator. He used type, his own and others', in typographic designs that ranged from periodical advertising to limited-edition books. He wrote about type with a lucidity that is rare among graphic artists. When Goudy was fifty-seven years old and had moved into an old mill which became the Press, he embarked on yet another new career. He decided that too much of his design was being lost in the mechanical steps of converting his drawings into type, so he became a type founder and actually manufactured his own type. The Syracuse collection gives excellent examples of each of his talents.



The double title page on the third book printed by the Village Press is unusual for its time, 1904. The swirling border was not particularly innovative. Elbert Hubbard and his Roycrofters were doing the same thing in our neighboring East Aurora, New York, and both Hubbard and Goudy were obviously greatly influenced by William Morris and the pre-Raphaelites in England. But Goudy was already demonstrating his own way with the classical Roman letterforms and his letterspacing of the left page is excellent except for *UPON*, which is falling apart.

They are the words of the
distant and the dead, and make us heirs
of the spiritual life of past ages.

The Books which help you most are those that
make you think the most. The hardest way of learn-
ing is by easy reading. But a great Book that comes
from a great thinker,—it is a ship of thought, deep
freighted with truth, with Beauty, too.

One of the “Lost Types” is Deepdene Text, done in 1932. The letterforms are interesting in that they go to pre-Gutenberg roots. The forerunners of the first movable type were, of course, written forms; only after they had become formalized in metal did they acquire the angular precision of our Text (or Black Letter) faces. Note how here Goudy retains the written flavor in the a and the y, in the flicks of the final serifs of m and n, and in the tail of the g. The capitals, on the other hand, are reminiscent of the illuminated ones that were painted, rather than written, upon their original vellum pages.

As a type designer he was no radical innovator; all of his faces are based on classical antecedents. But he imparted to each his own, unique elegance that is the hallmark of all Goudy work. Always the elegance was unostentatious; he winced at the period’s “beautiful atrocities,” typefaces with idiosyncrasies that disturbed the reader. The collection includes specimen showings of all of his types and they make a smorgasbord of visual delight even to the unknowing layman.

No one would have the temerity to name the “best” Goudy face; this would be choosing the “best” flower in a garden. Goudy Old Style, done in 1914, was certainly a favorite of many. Modeled on Renaissance lettering, it has the typical Goudy flavor, classical but comfortable. A typical Goudy touch is the tail of the Q, a “sedate flourish”; the phrase is no anomaly. My personal favorite is Goudy Text Inline. I have used it for the nameplate of several newspapers I have designed and to each it gives the imprimatur of quality that good journalism deserves. It is an interpretation of early English Black Letter but with a grace that dissolves the sometimes disturbing angularities of the original. The inline gleams like gold illumination.

Many typophiles find their favorites among the “Lost Goudy Types.” These are mementos of cruel tragedy. In 1939, on a bitter January morning, fire destroyed the Village Press which was then at Deepdene. In 1908 fire had

swept the Press in New York City but at that time the treasure trove was not yet as great as it had grown to be thirty years later. In the 1939 fire, drawings, patterns and matrices were all consumed.

Some sixteen faces are the lost ones. The oldest was Newstyle, done in 1921; the latest was Friar, created in 1937, which Goudy called his greatest personal loss. Friar is based on the uncials and semi-uncials from which developed our lower case characters, and Medieval, 1930, shows how the roundhand developed. Tory, a 1936 design, has the flavor of Caxton's type,

FRIAR {1937} 12 point

A TYPOGRAPHIC SOLECISM

✠ THIS TYPE FACE has been designed by Fred W. Goudy for his own amusement. ✠ It is, in a manner of speaking, a typographic solecism. For his lower case letters he has drawn on the half-uncials of the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, eighth century uncials, suggestions from types of Victor Hammer, Rudolf Koch and others. ✠ With these he has attempted to combine majuscules based on the square capitals of the fourth century, & the rustic hands of the scribes, to which he has added his own conceits. ✠ If the face has any quality of interest it is due to Mr. Goudy's audacity in bringing the various elements comprising it together in one font. Of course, an uncial required no majuscule, since it was in itself a sort of majuscule. Therein, he thinks, lies the solecism. ✠ MR. GOUDY has not attempted to give an impression of a cursive hand ; intending only to create a metal type.



AABCDEEFGH IJKLMNOPQRSTTUVWXYZ ffffl ct&
aλaaßbbcðdeefgchijklmnopqrrstuvwxyz · 1234567890 ✠

"The foregoing was written by Mr. Goudy at the time of designing the type, then called No. 103, later named Friar." Anyone who knew FWG could see his tongue in his cheek as he wrote this; he pursed his lips wryly as he referred to himself in the third person and chuckled when he compounded the apparent pomposity with the title "Mister." In this piece about what was to become one of the "Lost Types," Goudy showed that he could use the 26 Latin letters as deftly for writing as for typesetting.

GOUDY
HANDTOOLED
&
ITALIC



AN IMPORTANT PUBLICITY
TYPE FOR THE MODERN
ADVERTISER

The observer grows self-conscious about using "elegant" so repetitiously in talking about Goudy types. But what other adjective could one possibly use for Goudy Handtooled? This advertising piece was issued in 1927 when the influence of the Bauhaus and its stark Sans Serifs was almost at its peak. So it took courage to insist that ornamentation of the letterform did not weaken or cheapen it. And it took high artistry to give such a luster to the classical letterforms with just a simple "shading line."

and Trajan, 1930, has the classical beauty its name suggests. Some critics feel that Trajan and other Old Style Romans, with a characteristic roundness that Goudy gave to his Roman letterforms, create a “softness” that detracts from their authority. To me the effect is that of a wellworn tweed jacket that fits comfortably to the shoulders, yet never loses its air of quality. It is thanks to Goudy’s talents as a typographer, a user rather than a designer of type faces, and his generosity with his talents that we have recovered some of the lost types.

By the time of the disastrous 1939 fire, Goudy had been recognized in several fields. In 1922 he received the Craftsmanship Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects, the first time that the builders had recognized the art form that had begun as incised inscriptions on the architectural facades of the Eternal City. Three years later President Coolidge sent Goudy and William Rudge to represent this country at a graphic arts exposition in Paris. Books Goudy had written went into third and sixth printings. The Syracuse Medal was given to him in 1936 and three universities awarded him honorary doctorates.



✿ THE LYF OF SEYNT KENELME KINGE AND MARTIR

Here beginneth the lyf
of Seynt Kenelme

Seynt Ken-
elme martir
was kynge
of a parte of
Englond by
Walys. His fader was
kynge to fore hym, and
was named Kenulph, and

founded the Abbey of
Wynchecombe, and sette
therin monks. And whan
he was dede he was bury-
ed in the same abbey. And
at that tyme Winchecomb
was the best toun of that
countraye. In Englond
ben iii pryncipaul riuers,
and they ben Cameys,
Seuarn, and Humbre.

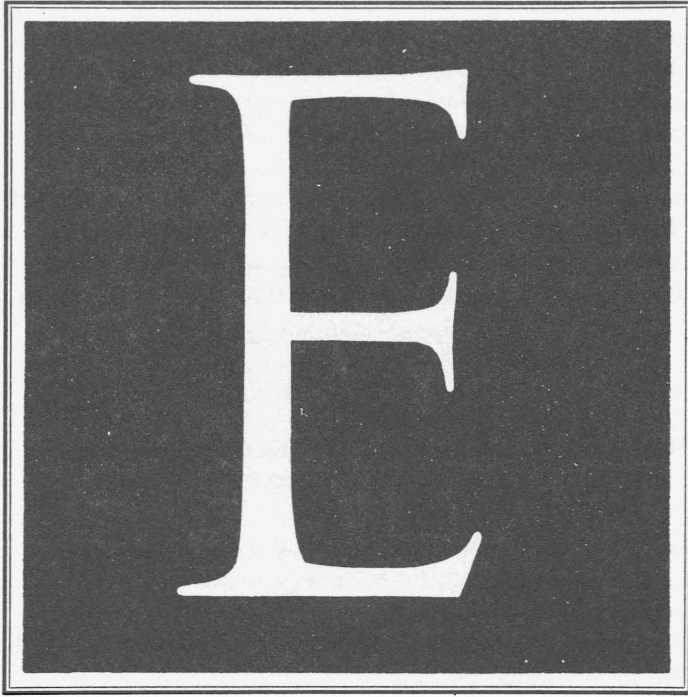
Typography always reflects the culture that uses it. This opening page of *The Lyf of Seynt Kenelme* was printed by Goudy in 1905 and reflects the tastes of the turn of the century just as much as it carries the flavor of the medieval.

It was logical, then, that Goudy be chosen to design a book truly for posterity. At the New York World's Fair of 1939, *The Book of Record of the Time Capsule of Cupaloy* was buried in the ground, scheduled to be opened in five thousand years. He accepted the commission on condition that Coggeshall would set and print the 64-page book. Village No. 2, a distinguished Roman, was used. That type remained at the Utica shop, as did other lost faces that had been used for commercial jobs or for chapbooks, as a Goudy contribution. Complete fonts have been assembled from such standing forms but in the rubble of the fire lay the shards of five tons of type, matrices for some seventy-five fonts and drawings for most of the hundred and seven faces he had done to that time, fifty galleys of new chapters, handset by his son, for the revised edition of *The Alphabet*, and all the type for a new book called *Recollections of B.M.G.* (Bertha Goudy).

Nevertheless, the joy of loved work remained and a new studio was built. Without his wife, who had died in 1935 and who had handset some of their most attractive books, Goudy did no more printing but kept busy with a multitude of projects. A quiet but deep joy of the craft is well expressed in his own writings. *The Alphabet* (1918), *Elements of Lettering* (1921), and *Typologia* (1940), are pleasing to the eye and to the reader's sense of fitness. A short essay, "The Type Speaks," is lyrical. Most touching is his 1946 book, *A Half Century of Type Design and Typography*. Without affectation, almost by indirection, he imparts his philosophy.

The finest monument that Goudy leaves is the universal love in which he was held, and still is, by all who knew him. A burly man who looked much more like a village blacksmith than an artist in type, he tried hard to achieve a bark, even though he could not bite. Once he wrote that "someday I am going to design a font without a *k* so those \$*%@\$¢ idiots won't be able to misspell my name!" A Frederic without a *k* apparently was as difficult for his contemporaries as it is for my graphic arts students today. It is hard to associate pictures of Goudy with the adjective "lovable" until one thinks of a St. Bernard. No matter how much he gruffed, he couldn't hide his own natural warmth, and it was reflected as affection by all who came into his circle. His friends were a *Who's Who* of typographic artists. In the Syracuse University collection are letters from Bruce Rogers, William Addison Dwiggins, R. Hunter Middleton, Will Ransom and Oz Cooper—their names a pantheon of the graphic arts.

Practitioners of those graphic arts are an unusually sentimental group. At the drop of a quoin, someone will dream up a "wayzgooze," the carrying on of festive meals that in old England were given by printing apprentices to a benevolent master. At the drop of the other quoin, someone will print a "chapbook." These small volumes, done with loving care after business hours, are printed for distribution to only a small circle of friends. At least a dozen of them were done about Goudy, for his birthday was always a perfect occasion for a sentimental gathering of "people with ink on their fingers."



E Presents no particular æsthetic features; the stem follows likewise the same gradual widening from top to bottom as in B and D; the middle cross-bar is decidedly thicker than the upper, and both are frequently thinner than the lower:—points of no significance except as strengthening the theory of original drawing by one hand and the cutting by another. The narrowness of the letter is significant, however; since I maintain that the marked narrowness of B E F L P S are the conventionalized evolution of these characters from the Egyptian pictographs—now almost lost in the twilight of fable.

It is my belief that the spaces required to represent objects which formed the ancient pictographs that later

“I think of a letter and then mark around the thought,” said Goudy as he explained the design of an alphabet. This reverse of the E emphasizes how the negative space around and within a letter is as important as the positive image itself. This, from Goudy’s *The Trajan Capital* of 1936, as much as any single letter, demonstrates the quiet elegance which is so characteristic of his work. The stark form of the E, unrelieved by any curves, is always challenging to any designer and here Goudy shows how a master met that challenge.

The food was plain but always excellent (much like Goudy type); the company was worthy of a printer's Valhalla; the conversation was erudite and stimulating, for not only is printing "the art preservative of all arts"; the printer is its curator. Chapbooks for such events are nothing but delight and the searcher through the collection always lingers over them.

I think my favorite item in the collection is the final pasteup proof for *Elements of Lettering*. This is a "working paper," an exchange within the family, between two craftsmen, the designer/author and the printer. Like his more public works, this dummy, with his written corrections, is simple, sturdy and unaffected. Even in this ephemeral form, it is a joy forever.

Goudyamus Igitur!

"Working Types" in the Newhouse School of Public Communications
for routine use of students in the Laboratory

Goudy Text in 12- through 60-point and the Shaded in 36-point

Deepdene, Roman and Italic, 8- through 30-point

Forum, 12- through 36-point

Garamont (Goudy's cutting), 10- through 48-point in Roman; through
36-point in Italics

Goudy Bold, 6- through 96-point, 15 fonts, in Roman and through
48-point in Italics

Goudy Handtooled, 12- through 60-point, in Roman

Goudy Heavyface, 14- through 36-point

Goudy Oldstyle, 6- through 36-point in Roman; through 24-point in
Italics

Goudy Open, 14- through 36-point in both Roman and Italics

Hadriano 2, 12- through 36-point

