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How to Build a Poor Man's Morgan Library

By NORMAN H. STROUSE

Note: At the luncheon of the Syracuse University Library Associates on 20 May last, after the Dedication of The Mayfield Library, the following address was delivered by Mr. Norman H. Strouse, well-known business executive and distinguished book collector:

NOTHING could give me greater pleasure than to pay tribute to another collector of books and manuscripts — particularly when that collector knows and loves his material. I'm certain that it is because John S. Mayfield loves his collection so much that he wished it to be kept intact and available in its completeness to a broad range of students, scholars, and others whose love of books alone might qualify them for access to a distinguished collection. Syracuse University is indeed fortunate in having this treasure trove of English and American literature, and John and Edith Mayfield are equally fortunate in the happy surroundings in which these books and manuscripts now have a permanent home.

My first acquaintance with John Mayfield was through a letter I received from him dated 22 March 1954, more than twelve years ago. He was inquiring about a first edition of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* which I had acquired, a copy bound by the famed English bookbinder, T. J. Cobden-Sanderson. It was inscribed by the poet to Charles Augustus Howell; and it so happened that Mr. Mayfield had a duplicate of such an inscription, a rather singular circumstance.

Mr. Mayfield's hypothesis was that Howell, being the rather disreputable hanger-on that he was, probably sold the first inscribed copy Swinburne gave him, claimed that it had been lost, and then asked for a second copy inscribed, a request which the indulgent poet granted.

Not long ago I came across another first edition of *Atalanta in Calydon,* richly bound by Zaehnsdorf, both the outer covers as well as the doublures in gold-tooled morocco, this one a presentation copy from the author's father during the year of publication.

In my files at home is a letter from Mr. Mayfield, dated 29 June 1954, in which he mentions that he has been working for three or four years on a bibliographical description of the first edition of this book, and has discovered some things about the copies of this edition which had never appeared in detail in the Swinburne bibliographies. In this letter Mr. Mayfield asked me certain questions about the first edition I had at that time, and I should now like to answer those questions as they pertain to the first edition I recently acquired and which I have with me.

The first question was this: "On page 50, line 2: does there appear to have been an erasure in the middle of the line, and the letter *p* stamped in to make the *paven*?"

The answer, Mr. Mayfield, is "yes."

The next question: "On page 50, next to the last line: does there appear to have been an erasure in the middle of the line at the end of the word *change,* and a comma inserted in ink by hand?"

The answer, again, is "yes."

The third question: "Even though your copy has been rebound, does it appear that the leaf on which appear pages 85 and 86 is attached to a stub?"

Yes, this appears to be so.

And finally: "On page 73, last line: does the word *my* appear as *mv* or has a tail been added in ink by hand to make the *v* into a *y*?"

Yes, a tail has been added, Mr. Mayfield.

Apparently this copy I have here seems to have met all the exacting criteria of a true first edition as required by bibliographer Mayfield, and this being the case I assume that it would qualify as an accession to the Mayfield collection, and therefore Mrs. Strouse and I should like to make a gift of it to The Mayfield Library as a memento of this occasion.

It might seem odd that I should speak on the subject of my own library at a time when we are paying tribute to the John Mayfield

collection. If there is a rationale for this it lies in the fact, firstly, that no one knows another man's collection well enough to talk knowledgeably and interestingly about it, except perhaps its librarian; and, secondly, the principles that are basic to the building of a personal collection of any importance at all are found to be inherent in all personal collections. And Mr. Mayfield's is a very personal collection.

I first made a talk of this sort some seven years ago before the Book Club of Detroit. Perhaps on this occasion I should have re-titled it *How to Build a Poor Man's John Mayfield Library*. A suggestion made by one of my book dealer friends, who has observed the changing character of my library during the intervening years, might be more to the point. His revision of the title would have been: *How to Build a Poor Man's Morgan Library In An Affluent Society*.

However, as I bring this talk up to date, once more, with some new material for this occasion, I rest content with the basic premise, and will talk for a little while about Mr. Morgan and my book collecting experiences.

From his early boyhood J. Pierpont Morgan was interested in books. And so was I. But he devoted himself to the making of money before he became a serious collector. I became a serious collector before I could afford it. That, in a nutshell, is the essential difference between the building of a Morgan Library and one of somewhat more modest proportions.

The beginning of Mr. Morgan's library, as we know it today, was the manuscript of Sir Walter Scott's *Guy Mannering,* a gift from his father in the 1880s. This seemed to spark a procession of important acquisitions in his own right, rising to a level of such notable individual items as a Gutenberg Bible and an early Shakespeare folio, both acquired in 1891.

By the turn of the century he had absorbed the famous Richard Bennett collection of manuscripts and early printed books, which included the magnificent items acquired by William Morris during the peak of his interest in calligraphy and early printing. There were thirty-two books in the Bennett collection printed by Caxton, who founded the first printing press in England in 1476. Eight years later he added fourteen Caxtons from the Lord Amherst collection, thus giving him the finest assembly of Caxtons in America and second only to the collections in the British Museum and the John Ryland Library in Manchester. To underscore the importance of this, the last Caxton to come on the market sold for $65,000.

By the time The J. Pierpont Morgan Library was turned over to the public in 1924 by the founder's son, it had become one of the genu-

"I'M AHEAD OF MORGAN . . ."
Mr. Norman H. Strouse addressing the Syracuse University Library Associates following the Dedication of The Mayfield Library, 20 May 1966. Chancellor William P. Tolley listens approvingly. Photograph by Mr. Harold J. Nisnoff, Syracuse University Center for Instructional Communications, Photography Laboratory.

inely great personal collections of all time, and a permanent treasure house for scholars, students, and the general public interested in our heritage of culture as expressed through manuscripts, printed books, historical and literary documents, and etchings and drawings.

The founder's son suggested in 1924, in a press interview, that the true value of the collection might be put at $8,500,000; and experts in 1934 estimated that it would probably be nearer $17,000,000 at that time. With the devaluation of the dollar and the growing scarcity of books and manuscripts of the quality and uniqueness of those to be found in such quantity in the Morgan Library, a king's ransom would be an understatement of its value today.

In the face of such a colossal achievement, one might question the wisdom of attempting to build a book collection of one's own. Visits to the great Huntington, William Andrews Clark, and Newberry and Lilly libraries — to name but a few others of substantial proportions — should provide further discouragement to the impecunious collector. But the soul of the bibliophile is seldom troubled by such vast contrasts between the achievements of the wealthy collector and the modestly assembled inhabitants of his own shelves.

Says he, "If I may not have a Huntingfield Psalter, I can at least have a choice illuminated leaf from some Medieval manuscript." The formidable prestige of the plural "Incunabula" should not mislead the humble collector to despair of owning a singular "Incunable." And what if Mr. Morgan could purchase the original manuscript of John Ruskin's *Stones of Venice,* this did not prevent my own acquisition of the original of a charming, unpublished eleven-page letter from Ruskin to a little girl on the subject of "Horses," which now, incidentally is on display at the Morgan. And whereas the Morgan Library is loaded with books owned by famous kings and queens, with emblazoned coats of arms on sumptuous bindings, I have Thomas Carlyle's own Bible and his Latin school book.

My thesis, then, is that it is possible to build a poor man's Morgan Library, granted a discretionary use of relatively limited funds across a period of years, a real love of books, and a willingness to become a devoted student of the chase.

To support this thesis, I have selected a number of items from my own collection for special reference, each of which is distinctive in itself, a constant source of interest and satisfaction to me and to such friends as may visit my library, and each impossible for the Morgan Library to duplicate.

Each of these items will be quite different in character, but there will be connecting links between them, when these links are carefully

traced, so that you will begin to observe a unifying theme to my collection as a whole. And this brings to mind a point which I should like to make, and that is that a true collection is the result of organic growth, and not necessarily the outcome of a preconceived plan. Starting from some tenuous root of initial interest, a collection begins to grow in many unpredictable directions. This in itself demands constant attention, trimming the developing branches carefully from time to time to guide the growth pattern into one of pleasing proportions, and cutting off the abortive shoots.

Let us plant, then, the first slim root. Facing the title page of a small catalogue, published by Thomas B. Mosher of Portland, Maine, in 1895, is a quotation from John Ruskin on the subject of books, and it opens by saying, "A Book is essentially not a talked thing, but a written thing; and written, not with a view of mere communication, but permanence," and ends with both a promise and an admonition: "Now books of this kind have been written in all ages by their greatest men: — by great readers, great statesmen, and great thinkers. These are all at your choice; *and Life is short.*" In the foreword of the catalogue, Mr. Mosher informs the reader that only four years earlier he issued his first volume — George Meredith's *Modern Love,* its first publication in this country — and that he had gone into publishing believing that "in the field of accomplished book-making," as he put it, "there was a reviving interest that demanded satisfaction, and so far had not found it."

Then, after a choice quotation from Emerson, Mr. Mosher proceeds to announce a new project in these words: "Mr. Mosher takes pleasure in announcing for the Fall season of 1895, the initial volumes of THE OLD WORLD SERIES, in which such acknowledged masterpieces of Literature are presented as to render the name chosen a peculiarly appropriate one."

The first of what would prove to be a fifty-two volume series, published over a period of 20 years, was the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* rendered into English verse by Edward FitzGerald. The second was the exquisite old French love story of *Aucassin and Nicolete* beautifully "done into English" by Andrew Lang, one of the most popular authors of his day.

These volumes were offered in limited editions of 925 copies on Van Gelder handmade paper at $1.00 each, and 100 numbered copies on Japan vellum at $2.50 in a narrow foolscap octavo, and the publisher quite frankly states his belief that he has "solved the problem of how to present a book in choice dress at a very moderate cost."

My first introduction to Mosher took place almost forty years ago, when I was browsing an old book store on Olive Way in Seattle, and a kindly old Scandinavian dealer by the name of Munson called my attention to one of the Old World Series of Mosher's, and suggested that for a young man of obviously limited means, the books of this press provided the ideal solution to my yearning for fine literature presented in a format of visual satisfaction. The purchase was quickly made (the price was 50¢, as I recall); the book devoured that evening; and as I scoured the Seattle bookstores, the other Mosher imprints followed, and a new world of great writers and wonderful ideas opened before my mind: Swinburne, Tennyson, Stevenson, Walter Pater, Robert Bridges, George Gissing, the Brownings, Emerson, A. E. Housman, William Morris, the Rossettis (Dante Gabriel and Christina), William Blake, and a gentle horde of others.

Largely through Mosher books (and I have over four hundred different Mosher titles in my library today) the pattern of my collection began to be shaped. It was to be a collection of the world's finest literature, presented when possible by the world's finest printers. I could not have guessed during these early days that this would lead me to the history of printing, early printing, and into the pre-incunabula era of medieval manuscripts.

Nor could I have foretold that the progressive exposure to related fields would cause sudden forays into new territories which resulted in significant subsidiary collections of Carlyle, Stevenson, Ruskin, autograph letters of Presidents, fore-edge paintings, and fine bindings. I admit that it might be difficult to convince others that all these interests are directly related to the main issue, but there isn't a bibliophile alive who doesn't possess his own peculiar brand of logic.

About eight years ago, a large section of Mr. Mosher's personal library came to auction at Parke-Bernet, and included in it were many of his own personal copies of books he had published, some on pure vellum and even unbound sheets. Needless to say, my bids through my book dealer were of sufficient strength to carry the day on most of the important lots, including Mosher's own copy of his first book, the large paper edition on Japan vellum.

Among my many prizes, however, was a small, paper covered pamphlet printed for his friends by the great typographer, Bruce Rogers, as a Christmas gift in 1909. It was titled *IV Sonnets,* these being by Wordsworth. It was inscribed, "To the Aldus of the XIX Century from an amateur printer" and signed "B. R." Following up what I considered an inspired hunch, I sent the pamphlet to Bruce Rogers with a request that he re-inscribe it to me, which he did in these

words, "Inscribed forty years later for Norman H. Strouse," signed "Bruce Rogers, October House, New Fairfield, Conn." In B. R.'s reply it became apparent why he was willing to do this. Curiosity got him. He had never seen this item at auction, and wanted to know what I had paid for it! What an association item! And unique.

Few people know, it seems, that Bruce Rogers drew some decorations for Mosher, and that the Mosher printing of *Homeward: Songs by the Way* by "AE" (George William Russell) is included in the "B. R." Bibliography under his incunabula.

Mosher himself was a great collector of books, and I have many from his library with his bizarre bookplate. My prize, however, was his own copy of the magnificent Doves Bible, one of the three great monuments of modern typography. It got away from me at the auction, but turned up later in the hands of a bookseller friend, and cost me little more than I should have paid as a successful bidder.

And speaking of Doves, and what an alluring name that is for a private press! I saw my first Doves Press book after moving to San Francisco. One look and I could not resist that pure typography, "so dangerously close to perfection," as I believe a critic once described it. It was during the depression, but by skimping on other expenses of lesser importance, such as lunches, I purchased my first Doves. But there was more than just books here. There was a man behind them: T. J. Cobden-Sanderson.

There was a man with a philosophy. And for those who have not read his *Journals,* there is some required but delightful reading ahead. He was a philosopher of the deepest hue. His diary alternated between moods of depression and spiritual exhaltation, between notations of practical matters and soaring flights of imagination. Through it all you can trace the development of the craftsman, first as a great English bookbinder, later as one of the great typographers of all times.

Most interesting in the *Journals,* for those who collect the work of the fine presses and study their history, is Cobden-Sanderson's own diary record of his destruction of the Doves Press type. The Doves Press started as a joint venture of Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker. The Doves Press type was designed by Emery Walker after the first Roman face of Jenson. The partnership did not work out well, undoubtedly because of the peculiar individualism of Cobden-Sanderson.

Walker withdrew from active participation, but remained joint owner of the type itself. Cobden-Sanderson came to believe that this type was his uniquely personal possession, and developed a fear that it would be misused should he somehow lose control of it or should his death intervene before its disposition.

Be that as it may, without warning there appears in his diary notes for 31 August 1916, written at midnight, the following entry:

"The Doves Press type was designed after that of Jenson; this evening I began its destruction. I threw three pages into the Thames from the Hammersmith Bridge. I had gone for a stroll on the Mall, when it occurred to me that it was a suitable night and time; so I went indoors, and taking first one page and then two, succeeded in destroying three. I will now go on till I have destroyed the whole of it." In his last entry he tells of an accident which might have led to detection, and the precautions he then took:

"And I am now on my guard, and throw only type, and clear of the bridge. But what a weird business it is, beset with perils and panics! I had to see that no one is near or looking; then, over the parapet a box full, and then the audible and visible splash. One night I had nearly cast my type into a boat, another danger, which unexpectedly shot from under the bridge! And all nights I feared to be asked by a policeman, or other official guarding the bridge—and sometimes I came upon clusters of police—what I had got in my 'box.' I had various ways of carrying the type . . . but the best device of all, though odd looking and conspicuous (my eye on the police) is a square wooden box with a sliding lid, used for keeping finishing tools in. Arrived at the bridge I cross to the other side, take a stealthy look round, and, if no one is in sight, I heave up the box to the parapet, release the sliding lid, and let the type fall sheer into the river—the work of a moment. Hitherto I have escaped detection, but in the vista of coming nights I see innumerable possibilities lurking in dark corners, and it will be a miracle if I escape them all. I am doing this wholly 'on my own'; no one is aiding me, no one is in my confidence. The wind is still raging, the earth still revolves, and still tirelessly is sweeping on its course around the sun, and in this great theatre of events I sit up and write my adventure, 'bequeathing' the Doves type to the Thames."

Cobden-Sanderson officially closed the Press in 1916, but the final work was not completed until after the turn of the year.

I have in my possession an original letter written by Cobden-Sanderson on 21 January 1917 to a friend of his, in which he opens by saying:

"The last sheet of the last book to be printed at the Press was finished yesterday and so the life of the Press at length is at an end and I remain alone with my printed books! But I am already engaged in much work moving into a home—a last home, perhaps—for Annie and myself, so that we shall live on there to our own destined ends." He goes on to describe some of the detailed arrangements being made,

then says: "You may wonder that amid the devastation of Europe and the world, I can indulge in such trivialities. But the truth is that precisely amid the devastation we must give signs of a new life. The Scriptures speak of how, when a mighty war devastated Israel a prophet bought a piece of land to build a house, just to encourage the people! So I hope to encourage the passer-by."

For forty-three years he spread across the pages of his *Journals* his love of his family, his friends, his craft, and his unseen fellow-man. Further evidence is to be found in the generous flow of inscribed copies of the product of his press. I have many in my own collection, including such items as Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* inscribed "To Henry Bristley, old friend & old school fellow"; his *Catalogue Raisonne* of 1916, inscribed "To Henry Fairfield Osborn" (Paleontologist at the American Museum of Natural History); his *Credo,* bound in full Levant morocco, inscribed to Katherine Gold, with three pages of holograph quotation from Psalm 148 on front blank leaves and one page inscription on end blank leaf from Psalm 96; a copy of his Emerson's *Essays* inscribed to Nora Jenkins, "A dear friend and our first pupil." Nor were members of his family overlooked in these tokens of his affection, for I have another copy of his *Credo,* bound in red morocco, with holograph quotations on five blank pages, inscribed "To my Dear Son, R. C. S., 12 November 1908"; and a copy of his *The Ideal Book,* specially bound in full red morocco, elaborately tooled in gold tulips, and inscribed for Anne Cobden-Sanderson, his wife.

My greatest C-S treasure, however, is a little duodecimo volume of Homer's *Ilias,* bound by Cobden-Sanderson just two years after he took up bookbinding, and seven years before he established the Doves Bindery. This was bound for his son, Richard, at that time a child under two years of age!

Illustrative of the organic growth of a collection, my interest in Cobden-Sanderson has never ceased to flourish across the years, nor has it ever found a terminal point in acquisition. A few years ago I acquired a scrapbook, assembled by DeCoverley, the binder under whom C-S served his apprenticeship, in which the teacher collected many memorabilia concerning his famous student; and shortly before that purchased at auction many of Cobden-Sanderson's manuscripts of his lectures, including those on "Bookbinding" and Nicolas Jenson. The high point of this auction, however, was a manuscript book in which Cobden-Sanderson wrote in a careful script on sixty-three pages what was described on the title page as "Poems learnt by heart by Richard Cobden-Sanderson and taught him by his father beginning in November, 1890."

What a wonderful feeling it is to have spread around one the direct and living evidence of the exceptional man, a great craftsman, and a true devotee of the beautiful, who built beauty into his own life and touched the lives of others with the soft glow of his flame. Could the Morgan Library give one more?

We must move on, even though reluctantly. But whose face could not fail to light up when one spots Cobden-Sanderson's nearby neighbor, rugged, bewhiskered William Morris, for whom the Doves Bindery bound so many of his Kelmscott productions.

After many years fame as an artist, craftsman, poet, translator of Nordic and Icelandic literature, Socialist, and lecturer, Morris decided that he could no longer tolerate the hideous, inartistic printing of the day, particularly when he saw his own poetry presented in such displeasing form, and set about to correct the situation. And when Morris "set about," he needed few associates in his enterprise. He had the vitality of a horde. In single-handed fashion he collected and studied the beautiful manuscripts of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, and the magnificent productions of the early printers who competed with the calligraphers during the last half of the fifteenth century. A medievalist at heart, Morris found in these manuscripts and books the standards sought and a determination to recreate them in books for his contemporary world. He studied the art of handmade paper, and specified the kind he wanted; he experimented with inks to get the rich black so long absent from printed books; he designed three separate typefaces, based on medieval calligraphic models, had them cut and cast; then proceeded to operate his Kelmscott Press for the last six years of his vigorous life. During this short period he printed and published fifty-three titles in sixty-five volumes, all handset and printed on handpresses, culminating in his famous Chaucer, the first of the three great monuments of modern fine printing.

It is no problem to put together a complete collection of Kelmscott Press books, even today. It simply would require patience, and money of a sort that would make Socialist Morris turn slightly in his grave (if he ever did believe that his productions were genuinely within the financial reach of other than the wealthy of his time). But representation of Kelmscott productions can be included in any modest collection, either through some of the lesser expensive books or through single sheets of the great Chaucer which turn up from time to time. My own collection is complete, but I am more interested in the exceptional items that give color and individuality to any collection. For example, Caxton's *Golden Legend* in three volumes, bound by Katherine Adams (one of Cobden-Sanderson's great students) and from the library of

C. H. St. John Hornby of Ashendene Press fame, of whom we must treat later, if we find the time. Another is William Morris' own copy of Caxton's, *The Historye of Reynard the Foxe,* one of ten copies on pure vellum with the Morris bookplate and signature. My most delightful coincidence is to be found in two copies of William Morris' own poem, *The Defense of Guenevere,* one owned by Cobden-Sanderson and the other by C. H. St. John Hornby, with their respective bookplates.

But I have two other prizes in the Kelmscott-Morris field. One is a trial binding for the great Kelmscott Chaucer, in full pigskin, bound by Cobden-Sanderson from a William Morris design. This design was then used for the forty special copies so bound. As only a small number of spoil sheets were used, this book is only a fifth as thick as the final binding, of course, and is unique.

The other prize is a copy of William Morris' poem *Love Is Enough,* a first edition published by F. H. Ellis, this copy printed on pure vellum. By commission of the publisher, it was bound in morocco by Cobden-Sanderson, covered then in red silk, and over this has been sewn the magnificent embroidery designed and executed over a period of two and a half years by May Morris, daughter of William Morris, with her letters to Ellis and Cobden-Sanderson's invoice tipped in. May Morris, incidentally, made many visits to the British Museum to study fine examples of the lost art of embroidered bindings as her guide. Her first letter to Ellis was signed May Morris; her last was signed May Sparling. She had married, meanwhile, the secretary and editor of the Kelmscott Press, H. Halliday Sparling. For those who have seen the great William Morris *Verdure Tapestry,* there is something in this embroidered binding reminiscent of the father's genius.

St. John Hornby was mentioned earlier, and was the third of this great trio of England's fine printers. His Ashendene Press folio *Mort d'Arthur* takes its place alongside the Doves Bible and the Kelmscott Chaucer to complete the set of three greatest books of modern times. It's a tough press to collect complete. The earliest items were somewhat ephemeral in nature, a number of them printed in quantities as few as fifty. The prices at auction on many of these are ridiculous and unrelated either to importance of content or quality of printing. An exception, however, is the almost unattainable *The Song of Solomon,* printed in 1902, forty copies only, all on vellum. The Ashendene *Bibliography* describes these copies as follows: "All the copies are most exquisitely decorated by Miss Florence Kingsford, afterwards Mrs. Sydney Cockerell. The different copies show great variety of treatment. The reproduction (shown on opposite page), good though it is, can

give but little idea of the beauty and delicacy of Miss Kingsford's work. Issued in various bindings of different coloured moroccos, mostly by women binders, including Miss Katherine Adams, Miss Alice Pattinson and Miss Florence Paget. Some 30 copies were sold at 10 guineas." That price in 1902 will give you some idea of the jewelled treasure this book must be. Copies seldom come on the market, but one came to auction 10 December 1956, and sold for $1,100. But I can dream of the day that one may come my way at a lesser price and coincident with some financial windfall!

But, again, as with Doves and Kelmscott, I have my own treasures out of Ashendene—and here I can match some blows with the British Museum, because whereas they have all the original wood-engravings from the Kelmscott Press, I have over half of all the wood-engravings from the Ashendene Press. Several of the Christmas pamphlets and other productions of my own Silverado Press have shown them off to not too great a disadvantage, I hope.

In the organic growth of any collection, strange mutations will inevitably develop from time to time, some of them refreshingly whimsical in character. The most delightful eccentric strain in my family of books is a collection of fore-edge paintings.

And what is a fore-edge painting? The early manuscript books were usually large and heavy, and were therefore placed horizontally on shelves rather than vertically, with the unbound edge placed outward. This fore-edge, as it was called, provided a tempting place to letter on a title, so as to avoid the problem of lifting a bulky volume off the shelf to identify it. This was the first practical use of a fore-edge. School children of this century, to my personal knowledge, followed a somewhat similar practice with their textbooks, but with certain improvements. By fanning the leaves of a textbook and holding them open in a spread position, names, titles, sometimes less utilitarian words were blocked on the fore-edge in ink, and when the leaves were allowed to return to their normal position, the lettering reduced itself to almost indecipherable marks. If, by chance, the fore-edge had been stained red by the publisher, the writing would disappear.

Several times across the centuries artists have painted beautiful miniatures on fore-edges in this fashion before the gilt was applied, and they became known as "hidden paintings," more commonly called fore-edge paintings today. The latest crescendo in this art form reached its apex during the latter part of the eighteenth century during the "Edwards of Halifax" period, when truly manificent work was done.

Traditionally, these fore-edge paintings centered on such subjects as landscapes, castles, cathedrals, bridges, hunting and fishing scenes,

and not infrequently portraits. Startling departures from tradition were to be discovered at times, such as The Last Supper or the eruption of Vesuvius. But my collection contains a classic—a copy of Milton's *Paradise Lost,* with a vertical fore-edge painting (the only one of its kind, aside from Chinese fore-edges), and the subject is a full-length portrait of Eve. The bookseller who offered this choice bibliographical tid-bit succumbed to the temptation to add this sly note to an otherwise technical catalogue description: "Depending upon how wide the pages are spread when one wishes to see this painting, Eve is slim or stout. How do you like your nudes?"

The late Mrs. Edward Doheny's collection at Camarillo, California, contains hundreds of examples of this curious art. I have eighty-odd volumes in my own library, varying from 32mos to folios; singles, doubles and a rare sextuple fore-edge; some hidden under gilded-gauffered edges, some under marbled edges; single volumes and sets, including a magnificent fifteen-volume set of Sir Walter Scott's novels, each volume with a painting appropriate to the title of the book. But after wandering through this garden of exotic flowers, who would not choose to return to Eve?

Fore-edges may seem to you to be a far cry from the principle I stated early in this discussion that a collection has a certain unity. But we must not suppose that such unity means that an obvious relationship must exist between all sections of a collection. The unity is provided by one's own personality and interests—and even whims, if they prove characteristic and lasting. Just as one's friendships cross the full spectrum of personality to the point that there are friends of ours that wonder what in the world we see in other friends of ours, so we may expect occasions when one book may look across the room at another and ask, "How in the world did you get in here?"

It is important that we should be led by genuine enthusiasms, but that these be tested for their permanence early in their appearance. Off we may go at a gallop, as I did with John Cowper Powys a couple of years ago because I had long liked his writings and suddenly flushed up a number of his original manuscripts. I soon tired of this bulk on my shelves, turned my back on what could have been a notable collection, and gave the whole kit and kaboodle to Colgate University. There the students of literature are having a great time prowling through this strange man's fantastic verbal fertility, and I've returned to my more tested pursuits.

But Carlyle was different . . .

I had heard of Thomas Carlyle since grammar school days; but across the years I noted that he was one of those English authors about

whom other writers wrote essays or passing references and those who prided themselves on breadth of reading habits would say, "Oh, yes, Carlyle," then pass on to some other subject. There are literary name-droppers, also, you know. I couldn't find anyone who had actually met Carlyle in one of his books.

Through the Doves Press, I came to know him. One of Cobden-Sanderson's choices of "eternal literature" for his Press was *Sartor Resartus*. It was among the first of the Doves items I acquired after the War. I decided to read it. It wasn't easy, and this explained why so many people shied away from him. *The Reader's Encyclopedia* describes *Sartor Resartus* as a "spiritual biography," and "one of the author's most characteristic works which aroused a storm of protest when it was published." It goes on to say, "Carlyle's style is savage, violent, apocalyptic, marked by unusual words and figures of speech and expressions influenced by the German language."

Once I became accustomed to Carlyle's eccentric style, I fell into one of those passions that the bookworm occasionally succumbs to and read everything of Carlyle I could lay my hands on, and dozens of biographies.

And I collected. First editions. Then first editions inscribed, such as Robert Browning's own copy of Carlyle's *Cromwell*. Original Carlyle letters and manuscripts. The complete manuscript of *Historical Sketches* fell my way one day. Then three original paintings of Carlyle followed in procession. Finally, and only two months ago I acquired the German grammar Carlyle gave to Jane Welsh as his first gift when wooing her.

Among Carlyle first editions his *Sartor* wasn't easy, for the very good reason that after completing this first great work which made his reputation, Carlyle went from publisher to publisher to the point of complete discouragement, finally making a deal with the publishers of "Fraser's Magazine" to publish it in ten installments with Carlyle to receive eighty-two pounds plus fifty-eight copies reprinted from the magazine typeset in book form. So there were only fifty-eight copies of the first edition. In the Dyer *Bibliography* it is described as a rare privately issued edition, and the statement is made that the University of Liverpool, University of Michigan, and The J. Pierpont Morgan Library each possesses a copy of this item. Morgan again.

But I'm ahead of Morgan, because in 1954 I purchased from a London bookseller a copy of this first edition of *Sartor* with Carlyle's inscription to the publisher's brother on the title page: "To William Fraser, Esq., with affectionate wishes and regards," and since then I have acquired two more of the fifty-eight—one inscribed to Sir William

Hamilton, Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at University of Edinburgh, the other to Mrs. Welsh, Carlyle's mother-in-law. I also have the complete holograph manuscript in 250 pages of Carlyle's *Historical Sketches*. So I'm several up on Morgan.

Probably the most fascinating Carlyle item, however, is his own personal study copy of John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, complete with bookplate, and with his pencilled notes throughout. What wouldn't you give to have been able to sit down with Carlyle and read such a book with him, listening to his critical comments as you went along? This book comes close to recreating such a situation more than a century later. Listen to some of these side comments, pencilled in his neat but sometimes difficult hand:

At the end of Chapter II: "Will any good come out of all this?"
Then, shortly, "It is very uninstructive and superfluous as *yet*. But let us see!"
Then scattered across the pages with increasing momentum:
"Oh, dear!"
"hoohoo!"
"Yes, indeed!"
"Oh! Oh!"
"Yes, and important, too!"
"Yes, yes. But, oh, get on to something more substantial!"

To illustrate the fact that some new discovery in the realm of the unknown is always just beyond the horizon, I went to Chicago one time with no intention of purchasing a human bone and jaw tooth—yet I soon became the proud possessor of these two unusual items which were preserved in a silver case.

I had a spare half-hour between business appointments this particular morning and decided to drop in on a couple of most charming ladies who deal in books. After tramping around through a treasure trove of fine bindings, I asked as an afterthought if they had any Carlyle material. "Yes, a couple of letters" was the response, "but we have something else of Carlyle's you might find interesting," and out came this solid silver box.

Inside the box, under glass and suitably mounted, was a fragment of an arm-bone, and a single jaw tooth. Mounted into the cover of the box were two Carlyle autograph notes signed. One read:

"Arm-bone from Naseby Battlefield; sent me in Sept. 1842 by E. Fitzgerald; now presented to John Childs of Bungay."
Signed by Carlyle at his home in Chelsea, 18 February 1848.

The other note read:

> "Jaw-tooth, dug from a burial mount (near Cloisterville) in Naseby Battlefield, on the 23d Septr 1842, by E. Fitzgerald and sent to me soon afterwards. Now given by me to J. Childs of Bungay." Signed by Carlyle on the same date.

I'm sure there are no duplicates of these relics in the Morgan Library!

This takes me naturally, in one leap, to Elizabeth Barrett Browning of *Sonnets from the Portuguese* fame, because I have *her* personal copy of *Zenophon*, in which she also has made many notes. At the end of the Greek version she has written: "Finished reading with George [her brother] Thursday the 16th of December, 1830." She was then twenty-four years of age, but long before this had earned the reputation of being a good Greek scholar. In her various marginal notes she finds, for example, "Xenophon's particularity in dwelling so long on the subject of food very amusing—he does so with evident pleasure."

A Greek phrase reminds her of "A kingdom for a horse, Rich: 3rd"; and when Xenophon writes that precedent labour always sweetens enjoyment she notes "how applicable to study."

How beautifully such things bring to life the sentient fact of once human existence in these names that have so long survived the passing of their outward personalities.

And I wonder what Mr. Carlyle has to say to Mrs. Browning on such a subject as they converse softly from adjoining shelves?

We have the authority of John of the Gospels, in Chapter I, Verse 1, that *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* And later he said, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*

From the very outset, there has been a deep mystery about words, and that is perhaps what surrounded books with a sense of enchantment across the centuries.

The opening words of Genesis are simple enough: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* But in elaborating on the steps taken to accomplish the task, Genesis reports that each step resulted from a spoken command. *And God said, let there be light: and there was light* was but the first of a series of commands spoken in words. Presumably there was no one around to hear these words, but apparently they were a prerequisite to action.

When Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden scene, the Lord communicated one single commandment, the one to do with the tree of

knowledge—and He did *that* in words. But the serpent caught on to the word business early, and became the first—but not hidden—persuader.

By the time of Moses, the Lord apparently became discouraged with the permanent effect of oral communication and had second thoughts after delivering the commandments by voice to Moses on Mount Sinai, who relayed them in turn to his people. He ordered Moses to return to Sinai: *Come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tablets of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.*

This has given a precedence to the written word, it seems to me, in the spiritual and cultural history of man. It has given irresistible force to the instinct to *collect* and to preserve the written word, whether by individuals (such as Mr. Morgan), or by groups (such as the Essenes of Dead Sea Scrolls fame), or by institutions (such as the fabulous Alexandrian library).

It has also attracted the devoted interest of artists of a wide range of talents in the adornment of books—the beautiful calligraphy, illuminations and miniature paintings of medieval times, the costly bindings that have contained our books across the centuries, the superb typography and illustration of our modern presses, the impressive beauty of fore-edge paintings.

All these aspects of book-making are in my mind—overt acts of devotion to books—recognition of books as symbols of the final Mystery of Life—the individual human personality expressing itself to other individual human personalities in the best way it can through the medium which God Himself found it necessary to use when He created the world: the Word. So why should we not encase our books in splendor, just as we do our houses of worship, our temples of law and government, and our institutions of learning?

As a last glimpse into my library, I should like to introduce you to an old friend—a friend most probably from your own childhood days—Robert Louis Stevenson.

Forty miles slightly northeast of San Francisco, the Napa Valley opens to the north—with its rich vineyards of varietal grapes. Within a radius of five miles of St. Helena, a little town located well into the heart of the valley, stand the fine old wineries with such splendid names as Beaulieu, Inglenook, Krug, Berenger, Louis Martini, and Christian Brothers. It is a thoroughly cosmopolitan valley, and remarkably unspoiled. Thirty-one hundred people comprise the little town of St. Helena, with a veritable United Nations of nationalities—English, French, Swiss, Italian, Armenian, and German. Spanish, too, of course.

The main street is four blocks long, a gain of one block since I first visited it thirty-five years ago.

Eight miles farther up the valley under the shadow of Mount St. Helena, a long inactive volcano that blocks the north end of Napa Valley, is another little town, Calistoga, which rests on top of subterranean pockets of boiling water, and sports an authentic geyser at its outskirts. Here in the mid-nineteenth century, Samuel Brannon, a wealthy entrepreneur, dreamed of developing a great spa. He did in fact wangle a railroad up the valley from the State Legislature, and built a lush resort hotel which later burned down. There remains little at Calistoga to remind one of these early dreams except a few buildings housing mineral baths, a half-dozen motels, and some early place names. Today a hundred yards from the two-block main street there is the little local airport where, on Sundays, a cluster of country people and Sunday drivers gather to watch the "in" group of our space age take off and land in gliders, or drop out of the air in colorful parachutes.

Against this setting, there strides through the upper valley the slender, eager ghost of Robert Louis Stevenson, poet, essayist, humanist —almost forgotten in the dramatic setting of what was the climax of the most romantic episode in his life eighty-five years ago. Few valley residents have ever read Stevenson's *The Silverado Squatters*, one of his most beautiful prose works that described the several months in 1880 he spent with his new bride and stepson in the abandoned bunkhouse of the old Silverado Mine high on the shoulder of Mount St. Helena.

It was during an early visit to the Napa Valley in 1930 that I first became acquainted with Stevenson's identification with this area, and visited the location of the old bunkhouse, by then long since gone. It was then that my interest in Stevenson was first excited, and led many years later to a modest collection of Stevenson first editions, autograph material, and memorabilia. It led also to the naming of my private press, The Silverado Press, twenty years later.

My collection begins with Stevenson's birth, as it contains an original letter written on 13 November 1850, by William Smith of Edinburgh, Scotland, to his relative Thomas Stevenson, Esq.:

> My dear Tom:
>
> My wife joins me in offering cordial congratulations on the birth of your son and I have real pleasure in wishing the little stranger a most prosperous journey through this present evil world.

I am glad to learn that your wife is doing so well and with kind regards to yourself,

Believe me,

Yours always faithfully

William Smith.

In a talk as brief as this, I could not hope to do more than sketch in with light pencilled outlines the life of Stevenson prior to his California visit. He was an only child of well-to-do parents, but was a wanderer from his early youth, seeking maturity, seeking health, seeking serenity within the framework of an affectionate family, all those things which came to him finally, if only for a brief three years, on the remote island of Samoa in the South Pacific.

In 1878 Stevenson met and fell in love with a California expatriate, Fanny Osbourne, a married woman with two children. In the most romantic episode in Stevenson's life, he followed Fanny to San Francisco, and after waiting for her divorce, married her on 19 May 1880. Disowned by his parents and penniless, they went to Calistoga for their honeymoon, but shortly took up quarters in the abandoned bunkhouse of the old Silverado Mine, where they spent two months. It was during this period that Stevenson wrote the journal notes for *The Silverado Squatters*, published after his forgiveness by his parents and return to Edinburgh with his bride.

Not long after his return to Europe Stevenson's struggle against ill health became ever more desperate, a complete change of climate was advised, and a second voyage to America undertaken. Stevenson stayed at Saranac in upper New York State during the winter of 1887-1888, while Fanny went on to San Francisco to charter a sailing ship for a trip to the South Seas. The good ship *Casco* lifted anchor and sailed through the Golden Gate on 27 June 1888, and the Stevenson family — wife, mother, and stepchildren—settled in Apia, Samoa, where they constructed a road up into the hills to Vailima and commenced the clearing of land, construction of the plantation house, and the cultivation of crops. This would be the Stevenson home until his death. Beloved by the natives, surrounded by his devoted family, host to many visiting friends, and at the high tide of his creative excellence, Stevenson died suddenly from apoplexy on 3 December 1894.

In my modest collection of Stevenson are a few prized mementos of the Vailima days, including his writing desk that stood in the library. It came down through Austin Strong, his grandson. In a letter now in my collection, dated 7 September 1944, Strong writes to a friend to

whom he had presented the desk, giving some of the color of the Stevenson household:

> This piece of furniture has always had a peculiar interest for me as it played a large part in my lonely childhood. There were no other children in the Vailima household so that I had to invent games for myself and furniture took on personalities. This desk stood in the library upstairs off Stevenson's study. Here in a dark room filled with books to the ceiling and piled in mountains all over the floor I would play games during the rainy season when we would be driven indoors for days at a time. This old desk became my companion and it was very useful for sometimes by child-magic I made it a castle, or a fort, or a humble cottage, but my greatest achievement was making it the poop deck of the H. M. S. Victory, Lord Nelson's flagship. I not only enacted the whole battle of Trafalgar, but I played all the parts, from the French Admirals, snipers from the fighting tops, to Lord Nelson himself. I also played Captain Hardy and I died most beautifully in my own arms as I was both Nelson and Hardy.
>
> I was the lone actor of this great performance except for Stevenson who would glance in through the open door with an approving twinkle.
>
> I saw this desk when it first arrived with over thirty great packing cases lined with heavy zinc. We had to get the services of the armourer of the H. M. S. Curacoa to bring his giant cutters. The Curacoa was stationed at Apia for nine months and the officers and midshipmen were considered a part of the Vailima family.
>
> The packing cases were opened on the tennis courts in front of the big house and our friends the naval officers were seen soiled and black and their white uniforms a sight to behold as they lifted out busts, a Rodin statuette, Sargeant and Hogarths, silver and all the household effects of 17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, Scotland. They belonged to his mother who gallantly came out to end her days with her son.

The Stevenson possessions at Vailima were finally scattered to the four winds. In the Mitchell Library in Sydney I discovered several volumes from his Vailima library; and at a Parke-Bernet auction a year ago I breathlessly bid in Stevenson's own Bible with the Vailima book-

plate. Among other memorabilia, I prize two folders of photographs—one containing those taken during festive occasions with Hawaiian royalty, the other a collection of photographs at Vailima, including several of the crew of the H. M. S. *Curacoa* described in the letter of Austin Strong.

The great collections of Stevenson are, of course, in the Beinecke Library at Yale, and the Widener collection at Harvard. One might assume that with such overpowering competition, a modest collector would have no chance. But this does not allow for the personal relationships that grow up between the individual collector and the rare book dealer. I should not reveal to Yale or Harvard how I happened to come by them, but I have nine original letters by Stevenson. One is addressed to Sir James Barrie, in which Stevenson displays enthusiastic appreciation of Barrie's *Little Minister*, and in speaking of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbeville*, terms it "languid and false to every fact and principle of human nature." In a letter to Stanley J. Weyman, he praises this exciting writer of historical novels for *A Gentleman of France* and its sequel *Under The Red Robe*. To be introduced to this author by Stevenson was well worth the price of the letter.

But my real coups have been the acquisition of the original manuscripts of the two poems, "The Guager's Flute" and "To a Dusky Woman."

"The Guager's Flute" first appeared in a book of Stevenson's poetry, *Underwoods*, renamed *The Song of the Road*. You may remember how it ends:

> Then follow you, wherever hie
> The travelling mountains of the sky
> Or let the streams in civil mode
> Direct your choice upon a road;
>
> For one and all, or high or low,
> Will lead you where you wish to go;
> And one and all go night and day
> *Over the hills and far away!*

Pure Stevenson, don't you think?

The other poem, "To A Dusky Woman" was published privately by H. H. McClure in a volume of verse entitled *Teuila*. The edition, a very small one, was issued in New York in 1899 for the friends of Isobel Strong, Stevenson's stepdaughter. It was rumored that Fanny

Stevenson did not approve of it. Perhaps the opening lines will provide a clue:

I must not cease from singing
And leave their praise unsung,
The praise of the swarthy women
I have loved since I was young,
That shine like coloured pictures
In the pale book of my life,
The gem of meditation,
The dear rewards of strife.

I have not touched on my small but choice collection of Incunabula and medieval manuscripts, because as captivating as this field truly is, such books begin to involve fairly sizable expenditures, and have no bearing on my original thesis.

These books and manuscripts I have described do not represent any substantial investment as collections go. In the aggregate they were purchased for not much more than the price of a new Lincoln Continental. But they were acquired across a period of years of earnest pursuit through the underbrush of second-hand book stores, the neat hedgerows of rare book dealers, the open countryside of catalogues, and the competitive obstacles of the auction house.

Much of which I have described here cannot be duplicated in any other library. They are some of the highlights of my collection, shedding color and interest to the many other volumes which may be unique only in their relationship to one another and to the whole of one's personal collection.

My purpose has not been to brag about my collection, but to reassure those of you who have a love of books and are infected with the madness of bibliomania that there is no need to despair merely because your funds may be limited and because the great institutional collections of the world would seem to have captured everything of unique interest and value.

In ending, I should like to caution you never to collect anything because you think you ought to, or solely because you think it might be a good investment. Vanity will get you nowhere, and AT&T will beat the averages on books nine times out of ten. Look upon book collecting frankly as a vice, but one which provides respectable evidence of its pleasures. It's cheaper than a mistress, and far more amenable to your mood and convenience. And if you pursue book collecting properly, the chances are that you can't afford a mistress, and that alone will save you a peck of trouble!

On 20 May last the members of the Board of Trustees of Syracuse University Library Associates held its spring meeting in The Mayfield Library. Seated, reader's left to right: Sol Feinstone, David A. Fraser, Warren E. Day, Mrs. Lawrence L. Witherill, Mrs. Lyman J. Spire, Miss Mary H. Marshall, Walter F. McCaleb, and Mrs. William C. Blanding. Standing, reader's left to right: Frank C. Love, Francis A. Wingate, John S. Mayfield, Raymond A. Hust, John M. Crawford, Jr., Norman H. Strouse, Donald T. Pomeroy, W. Carroll Coyne, Chancellor William P. Tolley, Warren N. Boes, A. Ralph Eckberg, and Donald O. Reichert. Photograph by Mr. Frank Dudziak.

Byron's Vampyre Letter

IN THE New York *Times* ("All the News that's Fit to Print") recently appeared the following piece from the United Press International news correspondent in Miami, Florida:

> A letter that is believed to be by the poet Lord Byron was found in an uncatalogued book in the University of Miami's library, officials said Thursday.
>
> The three-page yellowed manuscript, dated April 27, 1819, from Venice, was found in an 1827 edition of Byron's works published by A. W. Galignani. It was addressed to the publisher's Paris messenger.
>
> A 17-year-old high-school student, Richard L. Godfrey, discovered the wrinkled pages while alphabetizing uncatalogued books. The volume had been in the library for several years, according to the officials.
>
> The letter disclaimed the Romantic poet's authorship of "The Vampire," advertised by Galignani as one of his works.
>
> Dr. Archie L. McNeal, director of the university library, said the letter would be sent to a manuscript authority in New York for authentication.

In a note to the Editor of *The Courier*, Dr. McNeal revealed the result: "Upon checking with the Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library, we learned that this is a facsimile which Galignani placed in a number of their editions of the *Works of Byron* during the period of 1826 to 1830. We were told that this is an excellent facsimile and that this particular item has caused problems before."

This is truly to be regretted, especially since there have been previous and various reports concerning this particular Byron letter which, as Dr. McNeal was told, "has caused problems before." It was hoped that at long last the original had been discovered and authenticated; and the disappointment must have been painful, keen, and acute to the people at the University of Miami as it certainly is to the many Byron collectors and devotees throughout this country and abroad.

For anyone who wishes more information relative to this elusive Byron letter, reference may be made to *The Works of Lord Byron: Poetry*, edited by Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London, 1904), Vol. VII, p. 105 of *A Bibliography*, where is listed and described *The Works of Lord Byron Including The Suppressed Poems*, Paris: A. and W. Galig-

nani, 1826, with the note: "The Facsimile of the Letter from Lord Byron to M. Galignani, dated Venice, April 27, 1819, is inserted between the 'Contents' and the 'Life,' etc."

In her book *Autographs: A Key to Collecting* (New York, 1946; reissued 1963), the great autograph authority Mary Avezzana Benjamin refers to this Byron letter on page 112: "A number of clever facsimiles of famous letters turn up with unfailing regularity and are offered for sale. Not at all infrequently some are eagerly bought. One of the most common is Lord Byron's letter to Monsieur Galignani, editor of *Galignani's Messenger*, 18 Rue Vivienne, Paris, an example of which was at one time purchased at auction for $42 by a man who definitely thought it was the original." [Note: If the auctioneer guaranteed the item as being the original, then the purchaser certainly had the right to regard it as such. Who goofed? The auctioneer or the purchaser? Or both?] There are also references to this Byron facsimile in *A Book about Autographs*, by Simon Gratz (Philadelphia, 1920), page 68, and in the volume entitled *Collecting Autographs and Manuscripts*, by Charles Hamilton (Norman, Oklahoma, 1961), page 64. But the late Thomas F. Madigan has been the only one who proposed—albeit facetiously—doing anything about the vexatious appearances of this facsimile letter on the autograph market. In his book *Word Shadows of the Great* (New York, 1930, p. 71), Madigan wrote: "There are lithographs and other forms of reproduction masquerading, generally unwittingly, as genuine autographs. There is one that turns up at every point of the compass, and so regularly does it appear, and from such a variety of sources, that I have considered the possibility of forming an International Society of Galignani Facsimile Owners to meet annually on April 1st." And then he goes on: "The latest member appears to be a school-teacher from Texas. She, herself, brought the letter all the way to New York; it was far too valuable to entrust to the mails. As she proceeded to remove the wrappings in which the letter was carefully protected, I ventured to inquire: 'Is it by chance addressed to a gentleman named Galignani?' 'Why, yes,' she replied, puzzled. 'How did you know?' 'Because,' said I, sadly, 'it always is.' "

Madigan continues: "Galignani was Byron's Paris publisher, to whom on April 27, 1819, the poet wrote from Vienna [Venice] a most interesting letter denying that he was the author of the poem, 'The Vampire.' [Note: This work is not a poem at all; it is prose, and the title is: *The Vampyre; A Tale.*] When Galignani brought out, in 1827 [1826; reissued in 1827,] 'The Works of Lord Byron, including his Suppressed Poems, Complete in one Volume,' he had the letter lithographed and inserted the facsimile in the volume as an illustration.

"The facsimile was easily removed," explains Madigan, "and no doubt in time many of them fell loose. They were excellently made. At first glance they seemed to be genuine, and in later years, when their origin was either forgotten or unknown, these facsimiles came to be regarded by their owners as original Byron autographs. The years have imparted to the paper and to the printing a mellow, brown tone, and the uninitiated may well be pardoned for mistaking them for genuine."

But the University of Miami was not alone in its Byron Vampyre Letter discovery-disappointment this season. About the same time events were transpiring in the Sunshine State, the library staff of another institution of higher learning was experiencing almost the same kind of shock of revelation and realization centered around the identical letter the poet wrote to Galignani in 1819. The citation and a brief quotation are sufficient for the record here.

In the Spring 1966 issue of *The Library Chronicle* of the University of Texas (Vol. 8, No. 2), Mr. T. G. Steffan summarizes, in a most scholarly manner, much of the story about Byron's letter to the Paris publisher. The article is entitled: "A Byron Facsimile," and leads off with the following sentences:

> The University of Texas Library was recently asked for an opinion about the authenticity of a letter addressed by Byron to the editor of *Galignani's Messenger* and dated April 27, 1819. When some letters that Byron had written in 1819 were taken from the vault for the purpose of making comparison of their handwriting with that of the letter we had been asked to evaluate, we discovered, to the dismay of the staff, that another copy of the same letter had been catalogued in the Miriam Lutcher Stark Library as an original holograph.

Then Mr. Steffan adds the laconic understatement: "Although such misfortunes have not been uncommon in the annals of Byron collections, no library enjoys a shocking depreciation in the value of one of its possessions."

Now, will the real author of *The Vampyre* please stand up?

He was John William Polidori (born 1795), who studied medicine at Edinburgh, Scotland, and was a fully qualified doctor at the early age of nineteen. He was gifted and handsome and had literary ambitions, and although Byron considered him "more likely to contract diseases than to cure them," the great poet took him along as his personal physician when he left England for the Continent in April 1816. Later the two men quarrelled and eventually parted, Polidori returning to England where he practiced medicine, studied law, and tried his fortune in litera-

THE

VAMPYRE;

A Tale.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1819.

[Entered at Stationers' Hall, March 27, 1819.]

THE VAMPYRE

Attributed to Lord Byron who denied authorship in his letter to Galignani, 27 April 1819. Above is reproduction of the title page of the rare first edition, first issue, from the original in Syracuse University Library.

ture. In London, 1821, depressed it is said over a gambling debt, he killed himself by taking poison. He was barely twenty-six years old.

The claim to fame of "Polly-Dolly", a nickname given him by Byron, rests on his authorship of *The Vampyre* (and its oblique connection with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*), his association with Byron, and the fact that his sister became the mother of the Rossettis: Dante Gabriel, William Michael, and Christina. *The Diary of Dr. John William Polidori,* edited and elucidated by William Michael Rossetti, was published in 1911.

In The Mayfield Library, recently dedicated at Syracuse University, there are copies of the very rare first edition, first and second issues, of *The Vampyre* (both dated 1819) and of the first American edition (also 1819) which actually bears Byron's name as the author on the front cover and the title page. There is also a copy of Galignani's 1827 edition of Byron's *Works* with the folded facsimile present and attached, and nearby is a folder containing four loose and separate examples of the excellent reproduction, presented by friends and dealers over the years who knew what they were.

But where is the original of the Byron Vampyre Letter?

A Note about Owen Wister

A FEW SUNDAYS ago, readers of the Syracuse, New York, *Herald-American* newspaper were treated to an interesting bit of Americana in the form of an article written in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, by that popular journalist and commentator, Mr. William Hogan of California. The title was: *Owen Wister in the Tetons,* the Tetons being of course the name of the mountains there in northwestern Wyoming, and Owen Wister none other than the noted American author who lived from 1860 until 1938 and wrote such famous books as *Lady Baltimore, Roosevelt: The Story of a Friendship,* and the best-seller *The Virginian,* the last being the one on which Mr. Hogan's piece is based.

Here is what Mr. Hogan wrote:

> The illusion that one reads on vacation is shattered in this high mountain valley where, as Owen Wister's Virginian put it, "The whole world is far from here." The Tetons in all their grandeur rise like the ultimate barrier to heaven. One puts a book down, for what writer can compare with the reflection

in Jackson Lake, or the action in the meadows — a herd of cow elk and its young prancing towards the cottonwoods, having caught the scent of humankind?

And yet, Wyoming has its classic novel, *The Virginian,* a regional romance that retains its epic dimensions and authenticity after sixty-four years. This is the original, perhaps still the best, popular fiction of the American West. I had not thought of it in years, or of Wister, the Philadelphian and Harvard classmate of Theodore Roosevelt, who grew extremely fond of Wyoming when he recuperated on a cattle ranch from a nervous breakdown in the 1880s. He distilled his experiences and observations into this remarkable book.

It was brought into focus when the driver of a bus on a run down the Snake River Valley to a settlement called Moose attempted to interpret this Big Sky country by telling his passengers of Wister's larger-than-life cowboy hero, the Virginian.

The driver, Stan Boyle, a native of the Idaho side of the Tetons, descendant of Rocky Mountain pioneers, historian, and former high school principal, narrated a good part of Wister's tale during the drive. This included dialogue which, on subsequent investigation, I found to be a virtual playback from the original — and, of course, the Virginian's memorable poker table line to the villain Trampas: "When you call me that, *smile*!" [If any unknowing one wonders what *that* was, let him read the book. It's in the second chapter.]

Stan Boyle explained that he had disliked *The Virginian* when he was forced to read it years ago in a Victor, Idaho, school. Later he "ate it up" when he carried it with him during his youthful sheep-herding days. He learned it by heart, and it reminded one of an aging Gary Cooper as he described, with emphasis, the lynching over which Molly Wood, the school marm from Vermont, refused to marry the Virginian, although he had done no more than his duty.

Then before we reached the ranger station at Moose, Boyle described the couple's ultimate, romantic "bridal camp" on an island, which might have been Elk Island in Jackson Lake, a place where the Virginian had "counted so many hours of revery spent in its haunting sweetness, that the spot had come to seem his own."

Boyle had known Wister in later years. Was the Virginian of the type fast disappearing at the century's turn, along with

the antelope, bison, and unfenced grazing lands, a real person? Perhaps. He was Wister's ideal and the writer made him his ideal in this novel. "You can't write a story without putting flowers in it," Wister once told Boyle, and the bus driver left it at that.

The narration of a Western classic on a Wyoming bus seems as clean a stroke for regional culture as I have ever seen. As a result, Stan Boyle sold at least one copy of Wister's book (Paperback: 50 cents). I have it in my bag.

So much for Messrs. Hogan and Boyle and the touch of regional culture.

More important and certainly more interesting than what it was that caused the Virginian to whip out his pistol and utter that immortal command are the facts behind the writing of another part of the book, one which had previously appeared as a short story in a magazine and later been re-written and incorporated into the plot of the whole work.

The clue is found in the dedication of the book which was first published in New York, April 1902: "To Theodore Roosevelt," this reads, "Some of these pages you have seen, some you have praised, one stands new-written because you blamed it; and all, my dear critic, beg leave to remind you of their author's changeless admiration." Note the phrase: *one stands new-written because you blamed it.* This refers to the episode centering around Mr. Balaam and his four-year-old buckskin pony named Pedro.

The story was first published in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* New York, January 1894, under the title "Balaam and Pedro," and includes an account of the Virginian and Mr. Balaam chasing some runaway horses. Balaam, with a "fat bullet-head," was a bullying, contemptible, contemptuous, "mis'able little runt" of a rancher, originally an Easterner from New Jersey, whose sensibilities towards animals had been blunted and whatever humanity for dumb beasts may once have existed within him had been exterminated by his years on the range in the cattle business. He knew no kindness for animals, and when he once thought the recently-bought pony was malingering, he viciously cut his whip across Pedro's forehead, and a little later on beat him fearfully about the head and nose until the heavy stick broke in his hand.

While the two mounted men were trying to find the runaways out on the hazardous, torrid, ragged caked earth of an uninhabited desert, Pedro became utterly exhausted, soaked with sweat, with red froth creaming from his sore mouth. Balaam, furious with rage at the swaying,

played-out Pedro, crooked his stubby fingers and savagely wrenched, gouged, and twisted one of the pony's eyeballs from out of its socket.

Here is how Wister recorded this shocking incident:

> The cow-puncher [the Virginian] was about to advise him [Balaam] to get off, when he saw him lean over Pedro's neck and reach a hand down between his ears. The ranchman's arm and shoulder worked fiercely and twisted, when suddenly Pedro sank motionless, and his head rolled flat on the earth. Balaam, flung sharply on the ground, was jammed beneath him, and the cow-puncher ran, and taking the saddle-horn, shifted the horse's dead weight a little from the prisoner's body.
>
> "Are you hurt?" he said, as Balaam raised himself and stood up slowly, looking sullenly at the fallen Pedro.
>
> "No. But I got an eye out on him."
>
> The cowboy heard these words without at first realizing their import; but the horse lifted his head and turned it piteously round, and he saw the ruined eye that Balaam's fingers had blinded.

A week or ten days after the appearance of "Balaam and Pedro," Wister and Roosevelt, then a member of the United States Civil Service Commission in Washington, D. C., met at an annual dinner of a club to which they belonged. Wister recorded the occasion in his book *Roosevelt: The Story of a Friendship* (1930):

> I sat but two or three away from him, and half through the meal he turned and spoke of the story; beginning with words in its favor: — but, he asked, how had I ever come to write the sickening details of Pedro's tragedy? His cousin, West Roosevelt, had thrown the magazine down, and declared that he would never read a word of mine again. But the thing had actually happened, I replied; I had seen it with my own eyes, and it was not an isolated case, but typical of a certain streak of cruelty which belonged to that life. Quite true, he asserted; he knew that; but life every day offered degrees of repulsiveness which were utterly inadmissible in Art, where violent extremes and excrescences had no place. I stood up for myself; I had seen it, I insisted. What if I had? he asked. That didn't justify repeating it in fiction. Still I stood up for myself. The incident had made a deep impression on me, to strike it out would weaken the story. And I reminded him that we never liked tea-cup tales. He twisted his mouth and puckered his

brow, and looked as if he was going to purr; and intensity came out all over his face. And he let me have it:

"I'm perfectly aware, Dan [Roosevelt's nickname for Wister], that Zola has many admirers because he says things out loud that great writers from Greece down to the present have mostly passed over in silence. I think that *conscientious descriptions of the unspeakable* [italics are Wister's] do not constitute an interpretation of life, but merely disgust all readers not afflicted with the hysteria of bad taste. There's nothing masculine in being revolting. Your details really weaken the effect of your story, because they distract the attention from the story as a *whole,* to the details as an offensive and shocking *part.* When you come to publishing it in a volume, throw a veil over what Balaam did to Pedro, leave it to the reader's imagination, and you will greatly strengthen your effect."

One of the sentences spoken by Theodore Roosevelt back there in 1894 should be emphasized since it is more applicable today than ever before:

. . . conscientious descriptions of the unspeakable do not constitute an interpretation of life, but merely disgust all readers not afflicted with the hysteria of bad taste.

One cannot imagine what the great T. R. would think or say if he could see the worthless, trashy, indecent, unspeakable, licentious, and blasphemous stuff being spewed forth these days and times by possibly nine-tenths of the contemporary American fiction writers (and self-anointed poets as well), and promoted by the money-hungry publishers and touted by the unmoral critics as noble Literature fit for the mind and heart of the reading public of this country. He would undoubtedly conclude that this nation was suffering dangerously from the presence of a large mass of readers afflicted with the hysteria of bad taste which they accept, enjoy, and relish to their everlasting detriment.

It is to the credit of Owen Wister that he hearkened to his friend's immediate and vigorous protest, and when *The Virginian* was published in book form (1902), he did throw a veil over the unspeakable thing Balaam did to the pony, and left it to the reader's imagination. Here is the book version of the episode:

He [Balaam] made no answer, but mounted Pedro; and the failing pony walked mechanically forward, while the Virginian, puzzled, stood looking after him. Balaam seemed without purpose of going anywhere, and stopped in a moment. Suddenly he

was at work at something. This sight was odd and new to look at. For a few seconds it had no meaning to the Virginian as he watched. Then his mind grasped the horror, too late. Even with his cry of execration and the tiger spring that he gave to stop Balaam, the monstrosity was wrought. Pedro sank motionless, his head rolling flat on the earth. Balaam was jammed beneath him. The man had struggled to his feet before the Virginian reached the spot, and the horse then lifted his head and turned it piteously round.

The Virginian was an immediate success and jumped to the head of the list of best-sellers overnight. Before the year 1902 closed out, there were fifteen reprintings of the book, four followed the next year, and now for more than half a century editions have succeeded editions annually so that it would be extremely difficult to calculate the total number of copies produced following the initial appearance of the book on the market. Since expiration of the copyright, the reprint and paperback publishers have had a field day; just a few weeks ago one of the latter announced he had sold 2,000,000 copies within a ten-month period. The novel was dramatized for the Broadway stage, played ten years in the boondocks, and found its way into the motion picture industry where it was four times filmed, the first being in 1914 with Dustin Farnum in the leading role. In recent years the book has been widely used in the schools all over the country, and for some time now has enjoyed the reputation of being not only a Western, but also an All-American classic.

Recently a member of Syracuse University Library Associates paid a brief visit to the Editor of *The Courier*.

"Three or four Sundays back I read an interesting little piece about Owen Wister in the *Herald-American,*" he said as he eased himself into a chair at the desk, "and it reminded me of something which happened some time ago."

He unfolded a newspaper clipping of Mr. Hogan's article entitled *Owen Wister in the Tetons,*" and continued,

"Back in 1928, that's thirty-eight years ago, when I was a young clerk in an insurance agency down in Fort Worth, Texas, I learned from a book review that *The Complete Works of Owen Wister* had been collected and published in a set of eleven uniform volumes. These I bought and read one by one, and when I had finished with the lot, I esteemed his writings among the most interesting I had ever read by any living author; and I was blissfully brazen enough to write Mr. Wister and tell him so. I also informed him that I was something of a collector, and that I should consider it a great favor if he would let me have something

(2) officers in Paris, 37 rue de Bassano, To thank them for the constant courtesy and hospitality which I had met; and to say good bye. Return to America was impossible.

They urged that I remain; Material for a hundred books lay thick over the face of the desolate earth; all should be shown, if I would but delay and see it; the very next day I could be sent to Cologne. Without a visit to us, and the French, and English, in Germany, my explorations would be incomplete. A work there was offered. It could not be.

"Yet in a way", I said to the officer, "I feel as if I had seen all I can bear. For among the ruins I have met our Congressmen."

He flung up both hands -

"I know what you mean!" he exclaimed.

The chapter was given up, because it seemed too much of a digression. And I remembered that in 1916 I had met a Congressman who could both read and write. I felt sure there must be others.

But the general understood what I meant.

Long House, 1928.

Reproduction of the second page of the manuscript of Owen Wister's preface to his book *Neighbors Henceforth*, from the original in Syracuse University Library. Note the sentence: *And I remembered that in 1916 I had met a Congressman who could both read and write.*

in his handwriting. I suggested he might send me the manuscript of a poem if he had one around his place he didn't particularly care about keeping. I thought any man who could write prose the way he did should certainly sometime feel the urge to express himself poetically, and a manuscript poem in his handwriting would really be something unusual to have.

"And here's the letter I received from Owen Wister," the Library Associate continued. "It is dated Philadelphia, 14 January 1929, and you can see what it says."

The Editor read:

Dear Sir:

> Your letter and request are very gratifying. Thank you. I haven't any poem, but I hope that what I send will answer your purpose. It is the preface to a book of mine about the conditions in France immediately after the war, and entitled *Neighbors Henceforth.* It is not a copy, it is the original as I wrote it.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Owen Wister.

"And here's what this good man and generous author, who had never heard of me before in his whole life, so kindly let me have, all in his handwriting, just as he first wrote it," said the visitor as he proudly handed over the unique manuscript for the Editor's inspection. "I've kept it and the letter all these years along with a copy of the book, and I thought, well, I tell you, I was just wondering whether they would be acceptable as a gift to the Library."

(Editor's Note: Owen Wister's letter of 14 January 1929, the original manuscript of his "Preface—A Piece of Extravagance," and a copy of *Neighbors Henceforth* in which it first appeared in print are in The Mayfield Library at Syracuse University where they are preserved for anyone who wishes to see something in the handwriting of the author of *The Virginian.*)

Rev. Bigler's Invocation

AT THE DEDICATION of The Mayfield Library of Syracuse University on 20 May last, Rev. Vernon Bigler, the Methodist Chaplain, pronounced the following Invocation which is thought to be so full of beauty

that it would be appropriate and desirable to publish it here for the benefit of those people who were unable to attend this extraordinary program:

O God, who has given to Man a hunger and thirst for Knowledge and has prompted him to discover ways to make his Knowledge known and to preserve it for generations yet unborn, we pause to marvel at the Great Mystery of Human Speech, the intricate skills of Writing, and the crowning tool of Mankind, the Art of Printing Books.

We stand in awe at the seemingly simple, but profoundly moving, spectacle of books everywhere around us. Our hearts overflow with gratitude for these volumes which are available for our use and edification, opening New Worlds to our curious and inquiring minds.

Bless today all who seek New Truth. Stir with especial curiosity those who work as Librarians, Curators of Rare Books, and Preservers of Old Manuscripts. May they be grateful to Thee for their peculiar position of assisting in the task of sharing Knowledge and preserving Wisdom. Make us truly grateful for the multitude of beautiful tributes to Man's quest for Truth. Accept our thanks for the rare volumes which surround us here. Vouchsafe unto Thy servants, John S. and Edith S. Mayfield, Thy heavenly benediction.

May we, too, learn to choose (as they have chosen), nuggets of Truth, sources of Light, and depositories of Beauty for our lives with the same meticulous care and sacrificial giving which made possible this Library which today we dedicate. And teach us always that the sharing of our Treasures with our fellowman is more blessed than the acquisition of them for ourselves. Amen.

NOW IS THE TIME

Dear Friend and Supporter:

You are cordially invited to entertain the suggestion that now is the opportune time to come to the aid of Syracuse University Library Associates, and to renew your annual affiliation with that organization.

This may be done by either (or both) of two ways: donations of property (books, stocks, securities, etc.) or contributions in the form of checks.

Depending upon the value of the property or the amount of the check, you may become enrolled as:

AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER by contributing $10 or more in any year;

A SUSTAINING MEMBER by contributing $100 or more in any year;

or

A LIFE MEMBER by contributing $1,000 or more in any year.

All contributions are tax deductible within legal limits.

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LIBRARY ASSOCIATES
Syracuse University
Syracuse, New York 13210

The Board of Trustees of Library Associates is confident of your early and generous response and looks forward to your participation in the activities of Syracuse University Library.