



## The Library Chronicle

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### Recent Gifts and Purchases



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## RECENT GIFTS AND PURCHASES

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Among other gifts recently received from Dr. Charles W. Burr it is a pleasure to make special mention of three which he acquired for us from the world-famous library of A. Edward Newton; they are particularly valued, not only because of their intrinsic value, which indeed is great, but because of the "association" interest which links them to both of these good friends.

One of these treasures is an exceptionally fine copy of William Blake's engraving of "Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims." ("Painted in Fresco by William Blake & by him Engraved & Published October 8, 1810. Ye gon to Canterbury God mote you spede.") This calls to mind the delightful evening, five years ago, when Dr. Newton exhibited here many items from his Blake collection (including the "Canterbury Pilgrims") and talked so charmingly concerning them at a meeting of the Friends.

Another is a splendid copy of the first English edition (London, 1619) of Bacon's *Wisedome of the Ancients*. *Written in Latine by the Right Honourable Sir Francis Bacon, Knight, - - - - . Done into English by Sir Arthur Gorges, Knight.* This is handsomely bound in blue levant morocco, "inlaid with interlacing scrolls of red and white morocco, gilt edges, by Rivière."

The third item is a copy of Gabriel Naudé's *Instructions concerning Erecting of a Library. - - - - Now Interpreted by Jo. Evelyn, Esquire.* (London, 1661.) From this early treatise on library science (first published in French, in 1627, *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*) we quote a few extracts

in which may be recognized the beginnings of some of our more modern library methods:

It shall be very requisite to make two *Catalogues* of all the Books contained in the Library, in one whereof they should be so precisely dispos'd according to their several *Matters* and *Faculties*, that one may see & know in the twinkling of an eye, all the Authors which do meet there upon the first subject that shall come into ones head; and in the other, they should be faithfully ranged and reduced under an *Alphabetical* order of their *Authours*, as well to avoid the buying of them twice,<sup>1</sup> as to know what are wanting, and satisfie a number of persons that are sometimes curious of reading all the works of certain Authours in particular. Which being thus established, the advantage to be gained is in my opinion extreamly important; be it in respect to the particular profit which the *Owner* and *Bibliothecary* may thereby receive, or in regard of the renown to be acquired by their communication with every body; that we may not be like to those avaritious persons, who take no felicity in their riches; or to that malicious Serpent, who suffered none to approach and gather the fruits of the Garden of *Hesperides*; especially considering, that there is nothing estimable, but as it becomes profitable and useful.<sup>2</sup> - - - -

However, since it were unreasonable to profane that indiscreetly which should be managed with judgement, we ought to observe; that seeing all Libraries cannot continually be so open as the *Ambrosian*;<sup>3</sup> it were yet at least wise permitted, that whoever had occasion for it, should have free accesse to the *Bibliothecary*, who should introduce him

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<sup>1</sup> This evidence that even the seventeenth-century "bibliothecary" had to guard against unintentional duplication may seem to discredit the legendary tales concerning modern librarians, alleged to have known every book in the collections under their charge.

<sup>2</sup> The idea that a library should be *useful* is not, then, exclusively a nineteenth or twentieth-century idea; as witnesses also John Dury, an English librarian who wrote in 1650: "A fair Librarie is not onely an ornament and credit to the place where it is, but an useful commoditie by it self to the publick."

<sup>3</sup> The famous library in Milan, founded by Cardinal Borromeo in 1609, one of the earliest libraries to which public access was freely given.

with the least delay or difficulty;<sup>4</sup> secondly, that those which were altogether strangers, and all others which had use onely of some passages, might search and extract out of all printed Books, whatever they stood in need of: thirdly, that persons of merit and knowledge might be indulged to carry some few ordinary Books to their own Lodgings, nevertheless yet with these cautions, that it should not be for above a fortnight or three weeks at most, and that the *Library-keeper* be careful to register in a Book destin'd for this purpose, and divided by Letters Alphabetically, whatsoever is so lent out to one or other, together with the date of the day, the form of the Volume, and the place and year of its impression; and all this to be subscribed by the Borrower, this to be cancel'd when the Book is returned, and the day of its reddition put in the margent, thereby to see how long it has been kept; and that such as shall have merited by their diligence and care in conserving of Books, may have others the more readily lent to them.

From Dr. Burr has come also a copy of the first edition (London, 1625) of Bacon's *Apophthegmes New and Old*, and a three-volume edition of Aristotle's works, published in Venice in 1553.

From Dr. John A. Stevenson has come a very useful addition to our resources in a collection of 112 volumes of general literature.

Through the continued generosity of Mrs. Lea F. Singer we have been able to make several important additions to the Godfrey F. Singer Memorial collection of eighteenth-century literature: first editions of Smollett's *Adventures of Roderick Random*, of Johnson's *Rambler*, and of Goldsmith's *The Bee*.

A recent purchase which opens up a comparatively new field for the Library is a collection of nearly a hundred English

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<sup>4</sup> Here, again, we follow seventeenth-century precedent. Our door stands always open, to Faculty, Students, Friends of the Library, and to "those which are altogether strangers."

broadside ballads, principally of the latter half of the seventeenth century. The broadsides were indeed a crude form of literature, but they are of interest to students of our literary backgrounds and development, and also to students of history, both political and social, for the light which they throw on the state of popular feeling on controversial issues. In a later issue of the *Chronicle* we shall print a description of this collection by Dr. John C. Mendenhall. Our holdings in seventeenth-century English literature have been greatly strengthened also by purchase from the Huntington Library of photostat copies of more than fifty scarce books, thus making available at slight cost works which otherwise would be obtainable only at prohibitive cost, if at all.

From Mrs. S. W. Ffoulkes has come a gift of 93 volumes, mostly English, Scottish, and Welsh histories of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Grateful acknowledgment is made of receipt of a most welcome addition to the Library's funds for the purchase of books, a gift of \$500 from Mrs. William Fitler.

#### WEIR MITCHELL CORRESPONDENCE

We have been fortunate in enriching our manuscript resources with some highly interesting correspondence between S. Weir Mitchell and several other American men of letters. The collection includes 23 letters from William Dean Howells to Mitchell and 15 from Mitchell to Howells, and smaller numbers from James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier, Richard Watson Gilder, and others. This acquisition is a valuable supplement to the original manuscripts of *Hugh Wynne*, *Constance Trescot*, *Westways*, and others of his books, which Mitchell himself presented to the Library.

In February, to commemorate the anniversary of Mitchell's birth (February 15, 1829), we shall have in the Library an

exhibition of some of his literary manuscripts, the correspondence, and other material relating to him. Not much of the recently acquired correspondence should be published unless carefully studied and used in connection with other material, but we print here, to accompany the coming exhibit, a few commendations of Mitchell's work, of a general nature.

William Dean Howells, then editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, wrote, November 3, 1872: "I accept 'Miss Helen'—as I think we had better call the story—with pleasure, though I don't think it's so good as some of your psycho-physiological things, at which, by the way, I wish you would try your hand again for us. I am always so glad to have your writing in the magazine that I wish I might have your *name* also." ["Miss Helen" appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* of August, 1873, with authorship ascribed only to "W.M." The "Atlantic Index, 1857-1888" attributes to Mitchell five previous contributions, all published anonymously, between 1866 and 1870. All were of a "psycho-physiological" nature; among them was the *Autobiography of a Quack*. A letter from Mitchell to Howells, October 26, 1872, reveals that "Miss Helen" he had entitled "Cherry Neck," but had suggested also "certain alias titles to give you a freedom of choice." At that time, this letter reveals, Mitchell and Howells had never met.]

December 19, 1883, Howells wrote: "I don't know why you should think yourself a subject for any one's oblivion, mine least of all, for wasn't I your earliest and most devoted editor? - - - I have been waiting for the arrival of the book you spoke of sending but it hasn't come. If it's your poems; I am glad beforehand, for I like every line of yours that I've seen."

In 1886 Mitchell published the novel *Roland Blake*. "I write to thank you for your novel after reading it—a risk I

do not generally take," wrote Lowell. "I found it very interesting. It is fresh and vivid, the characters clean cut and varied, and you have succeeded in laying hold of a new variety of villain which is refreshing."

From Whittier, in 1889, came an acknowledgment of a volume of poems, presumably *Cup of Youth and Other Poems*, which Mitchell had just published. "I have just returned and have only had time to read too hastily thy beautiful book. If there had been any doubt (I certainly had none) of thy true poetic genius, this little volume, will remove it. I heartily thank thee for kindly sending it, and congratulate thee upon its excellence."

A typewritten letter of April, 1905, signed by Richard Watson Gilder, editor of *Century Magazine*, says: "You know how much I care for your poems. I rank them very high indeed, and in that I am not singular, for the best appreciators of poetry in this country have the same opinion of them." Then the critic becomes submerged in the publisher. "As to prices, that is, from a purely business point of view, our publishers are not favorable to high prices for poetry unless it should come from some extremely popular source, like Longfellow or Tennyson, where the mere announcement is a business asset. - - - They would say, probably, that a story by Weir Mitchell is assuredly marketable; a poem by Weir Mitchell has not the same marketable value in book form." After this friendly warning, and more to the same effect, the letter ends: "I have not seen any of the new poems of yours, but I dearly hope that we can print some of your poetry next year."

James Lane Allen wrote in 1910: "Considering what you say in regard to mid-February and your eightieth birthday, I venture to write down here some lines of Dr. Holmes—as my offering to you:

“At sixty-two life has begun;  
At seventy-three begins once more;  
Fly swifter as thou near'st the sun  
And brighter shine at eighty-four.  
At ninety-five shouldst thou arrive,  
Still wait on God and work and thrive!”

But a letter from Howells in 1913 contains a suggestion that both his life and Mitchell's were running out. Less than two months before Mitchell's death Howells wrote: “I too lament that we do not meet; you are the only contemporary left whom I could talk with.”

