

BULLETIN OF  
The John Rylands University Library  
of Manchester

Edited by Dr. F. Taylor, F.S.A.

*Published with the aid of the Francis Neilson Fund*

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VOL. 57

SPRING 1975

No. 2

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NOTES AND NEWS

IT is with deep regret that we record the death, on 10 February, of Mr. Ronald Hall, who was Librarian of the John Rylands Library from October 1963 to November 1970. His retirement in the latter year coincided with the agreement for the merger between the Rylands and the Library of the University of Manchester, to which he made an important contribution.



RONALD  
HALL

An old boy of Manchester Grammar School, Mr. Hall, apart from his war years in the R.A.F., spent virtually the whole of his life with the Library. He joined the staff as an assistant in 1915 and held successively the posts of Assistant Librarian (1927), Keeper of Printed Books (1949) and Acting Librarian (1960). In all, he was a member of staff for over fifty-five years, a unique record for the Rylands. His services were acknowledged by the University in 1966 when the Honorary Degree of Master of Arts was conferred on him.

His interests in the field of printed books were wide and before his appointment as Keeper he had occupied most of the positions in that Department. He had a particular love of incunabula and contributed much to our knowledge of that side of the Library's collections. This work he continued after his retirement and he was still engaged in it only a few days before

his sudden death. He carried this sense of dedication into his life outside the Library, playing a prominent part in the social activities and church affairs of the parish in which he lived.

We have lost one who had made himself part of the Library, and not by length of service alone, and his passing will be deeply mourned by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

The Italian poet, Petrarch has been aptly described as “ the first modern man ”. A humanist long before the flowering of the Renaissance, he was a man of wide learning with a high regard for the classics, a preacher of the importance of tolerance and reason, and a human being acutely aware of the power of the emotions.

PETRARCH  
AND HIS  
ADMIRERS:  
AN EXHIBI-  
TION OF  
PRINTED  
BOOKS

In the current exhibition prominence is inevitably given to the earliest editions of the *Canzoniere* and *Trionfi*. Only five years after printing was introduced into Italy, the first dated edition of Petrarch's *Rime* was published at Venice in 1470, and a copy of this is shown. The Library has copies of thirteen editions of the Italian verse printed before 1500, and eight of these are on display. In the early years of the history of printing, assiduous scholarship is discernible in the efforts of editors to collate manuscripts, to collect ancillary information, and to furnish the text with commentaries. Of all the early editions, however, the most accurate is certainly the Aldine edition of 1501 prepared by the humanist Bembo ; Bembo's own vellum copy is included in the exhibition.

Curiously, in his lifetime Petrarch's fame derived from his Latin works, not from his Italian verse. Accordingly, a case has been reserved for first editions of these Latin writings which disclose not only the extent of his humanistic learning but also the conflicts within his own mind. In the first edition of the *Bucolica carmina*, 1473, the poet expresses his regard for classical poetry, his grief and sense of patriotism, and his contempt for the corruption at the papal court in Avignon. In *De contemptu mundi*, displayed in the first edition printed at Strassburg before 1473, through the medium of a series of dialogues with St. Augustine he discusses his emotional and spiritual problems at a

time of internal crisis. *De vita solitaria*, also published at Strassburg before 1473, reveals his modernity; although he extols the advantages of a solitary life, he anticipates Rousseau in his belief in the importance of natural things and supports the middle way, the happy mean between total asceticism and luxury. In the *Psalmi penitentiales*, represented in the rare edition published at Naples in 1476, Petrarch recognizes the glory of the world but is oppressed by his own troubles and his need for God's help.

The aim of the exhibition is not merely to illustrate the works and expose the mind of Petrarch. Its secondary object is to trace his influence in his native land and in other European countries. The poems of Marot, Saint-Gelais, Du Bellay and Desportes, all presented in contemporary editions, bear witness to his legacy to France. Petrarchism in Spain and Portugal is mirrored in the verses of Fernando de Herrera and Luis de Camões.

In sixteenth-century Italy, the anthologies provide the best indication of poetic trends. For this reason, two volumes of *Rime diverse*, published by Giolito at Venice in 1545 and 1555, have been included. The first collection of poems by authors including Alamanni, Ariosto, Bembo, Castiglione, Bernardo Tasso and Della Casa, contains the work of poets who admired Petrarch for the smooth, polished manner in which he expressed lyrical sentiment. The second anthology, confined mainly to Neapolitan poets, reveals the flamboyance of Petrarchans like Costanzo, Rota, Carrafa and Tansillo, who combined natural exuberance with a passion for his conceits and antitheses. The first edition of Bembo's *Prose*, 1525, is a reminder in the exhibition that for many sixteenth-century scholars, Petrarch was one of the greatest masters of good literary Italian. Vellutello's edition of Petrarch's *Rime*, 1525, with its vast commentary and the interesting map of Vaucluse, provides an example of the diligence of those who undertook research into Petrarch, his work, and his relationship with Laura. Later, this operation was sometimes carried to absurd limits, as in the case of *Petrarcha redivivus*, 1650, which is also shown: the author, Tomasini, tried to make concrete the most elusive reveries of

Petrarchan imagery. The cult of Petrarch is still apparent in the eighteenth-century verses of the Arcadian Academy of Rome: the *Rime* of the first volume, published in 1716 and displayed in the exhibition, are either Petrarchan sonnets or Pindaric odes. The return to Petrarch was a violent reaction against the baroque quality of Marinism.

In English literature, it is astonishing to notice the range of Petrarchan influence. Chaucer, a contemporary of both Petrarch and Boccaccio, borrowed from the Latin of the former, not from the original *Decameron*, for his story of Griselda, transformed by the English poet into the Clerk's Tale and illustrated in the exhibition by Pynson's rare edition of the *Canterbury Tales* of 1490. The poems of Wyatt and Surrey, displayed in the second edition of Tottell's famous *Miscellany*, 1567, reflect the first attempts to adapt the form of the Petrarchan sonnet to the structure of the English language. In the *Amoretti* of 1595, Spenser's sighs and tears are those of a true Petrarchan lover; but like Wyatt and Surrey, he made innovations in the sonnet-structure to suit the requirements of his own tongue. Shakespeare, always independent, ridiculed the over-zealous worshippers of Petrarch in his celebrated sonnet, "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun", shown in the exhibition in the first edition of the *Sonnets*, 1609. Milton, on the other hand, composed sonnets in Italian in his youth strictly Petrarchan in content and in rhyming scheme, and these are included in the exhibition in the first edition of his *Poems*, 1645. Wordsworth's "Scorn not the sonnet" represents the revival of the use of this poetic instrument by the romantic poets of the early nineteenth-century. Finally, the first limited edition of Ugo Foscolo's *Essays on Petrarch*, 1821, bridges the gap between England and Italy. Foscolo wrote the best Italian sonnets in Petrarchan style since the effusions of the sixteenth century; but he lived for many years in England and his critical study of Petrarch was written and published in English.

European admiration for Petrarch was well justified, although occasionally it reached the limits of absurdity and deserved the ridicule it received. The best poets, however, learned much

from him, but created new and living verse through their natural vigour and imagination.

A catalogue has been prepared and copies may be obtained from the Library at a nominal price of 10p each.

The Library has considerable holdings of nineteenth-century letters and papers, in addition to various autograph collections, and a selection from these, dealing with well-known British writers and artists of the nineteenth century, is now on exhibition.

19TH CEN-  
TURY  
BRITISH  
WRITERS  
AND ARTISTS:  
A MANU-  
SCRIPT  
EXHIBITION

Wordsworth, Lamb, Southey, Sydney Smith and Mary Russell Mitford are represented in the first case. The lengthy letter of Wordsworth, written on 28 November 1808, is of interest not only as dealing almost entirely with his efforts to promote Coleridge's weekly journal *The Friend*, but also as being an item stated to be "untraced" in the standard edition of his correspondence.<sup>1</sup> Lamb writes to his friend Barron Field, then (1820) in Australia as a judge of the supreme court of New South Wales, referring to the latter's recent privately printed verses relating to that country; Lamb had reviewed them in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*. The letter of Sydney Smith is included because of its direct relevance to this area. Written to Edward Davies Davenport of Capesthorpe Hall, Cheshire in 1820, it is concerned with "Peterloo". Although best known for *Our Village*, Miss Mitford's early literary hopes were concentrated on the drama and in the letter displayed she writes of her play *Charles the First*, which she had submitted to the actor Kemble. It is one of some 180 letters in our collections which she exchanged with Thomas Noon Talfourd, on whose knowledge of the London theatre she relied heavily. An interesting Anti-Slavery collection

<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Arranged and Edited by the Late Ernest de Selincourt. 2nd edn. II, The Middle Years, Part 1 (1806-11)*, revised by M. Moorman (Oxford, 1969), pp. 275-6, headed "MS. Untraced". Both Ernest de Selincourt and Mrs. Moorman took their text from Knight's edition of 1907 (i. 382-4), and he does not indicate his source. The date on the original, although blotted, appears to be "28 November", not "26" as in the printed texts. The finding reference is Ryl. English MS. 355/226.

in the Library containing several letters from well-known literary figures was formed by Mrs. Mary Ann Rawson of Sheffield in the 1830s and later published (1834) in part under the title *The Bow in the Cloud*. A letter of Southey written to her from Keswick in 1833 was, however, not included in the publication and this is exhibited. It is of interest as illustrating his attitude to abolition.

The second case includes letters of Coleridge, Macaulay, Carlyle and W. S. Landor. Coleridge writes (1826) to his nephew Edward, a master at Eton, concerning the son of James Gillman at whose house in Highgate he lived from 1816 until his death in 1834. From our Spring-Rice manuscripts has been chosen a letter sent by Macaulay in 1834 from India, where he was a member of the supreme council, to Thomas Spring-Rice (later Baron Monteagle), setting out his views on current British politics and, particularly, on the leadership of the House of Commons. We have a number of letters from Carlyle to the Cambridge antiquary Charles Henry Cooper, who gave much assistance to Carlyle with various of his works. From these we show one written in 1846 concerning the *Letters and Speeches* of Cromwell, the second, enlarged, edition of which appeared that year. Several articles dealing with the Library's Landor collection have already been published in the *Bulletin*. The letter exhibited, one of a group which Landor wrote to his sisters Elizabeth and Ellen from Florence in 1834, refers to Coleridge, who had recently died, and Southey.

Amongst our more outstanding nineteenth-century literary holdings are correspondence and papers of Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens, and from these are displayed: the famous letter (twelve pages in length) of 4 September 1848 in which Charlotte Brontë describes to her friend Mary Taylor her first visit, with her sister Anne, to Smith, Elder & Co., "with the view of proving our separate identity", as the three sisters had, of course, previously published under the pseudonyms Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell; the press copy of Mrs. Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, her last novel, unfinished at her death in November 1865; and a letter (1850) in which Dickens, having read *Mary Barton*, invites Mrs. Gaskell to contribute to *Household*

*Words.* At the side of these is placed a photograph of Mrs. Gaskell, notable as being one of the last she had taken. The remaining item in this case also concerns her. It is a letter (1859) from George Eliot. Mrs. Gaskell, having just learned that Marian Evans was the true author of *Scenes of Clerical Life* and *Adam Bede*, had written to her to say how much she admired them. This is George Eliot's reply and in it she, in turn, praises *Cranford* and *Mary Barton*. It is, incidentally, taken from a personal autograph collection which Mrs. Gaskell herself formed.

The latter part of the century is briefly represented by Ruskin, John Stuart Mill, Hardy and Ernest Dowson. We are fortunate to possess a large Ruskin collection, as BULLETIN readers will know, and this includes a series of letters which he wrote to R. N. Wornum, Keeper of the National Gallery, in connection with the assistance he gave between 1856 and 1858 with the examination, sorting and framing of the drawings and sketches which Turner had bequeathed to the nation. The volume in which the series is contained is displayed, open at a letter of 1857 in which Ruskin deals with this work. John Stuart Mill is represented by the press copy of his *Autobiography*, the first edition of which appeared in 1873, and Hardy by the original manuscript of his short story *A Tragedy of Two Ambitions*, written in 1888 and published in 1894 in *Life's Little Ironies*. Two letters of Dowson are on exhibition, both written to his friend John Gray. The first, dated 27 December 1895, contains the text of his latest poem "Saint Germain-en-Laye (1887-1895)", the second, written in February of the following year, requests Gray to send him back the poem, as he himself could not remember it and did not have a personal copy.

The final case is devoted to artists. Three of the items here occur in a collection of correspondence of the art critic M. H. Spielmann which we acquired in 1964. They are from Ford Madox Brown (1886), relating to the murals which he executed in Manchester Town Hall; from Frith (1890), concerning certain of his paintings, including his portrait of Dickens; and from Watts (1885), correcting what he considered misconceptions about his work and particularly about his well-known equestrian statue

*Physical Energy.* A letter from Burne-Jones to Ruskin's cousin Joan Severn, written in 1893, deals with Ruskin's interest in Venice and Verona ; it was dictated to his wife Georgina. From our Holman Hunt Collection is shown the Diary which the painter kept between February and December 1855 during his first visit to the Middle East. It is open at entries relating to his famous painting *The Scapegoat*.

A catalogue of the exhibition has been prepared and copies may be obtained from the Library at a nominal price of 10p each.

The British Academy Committee on Oriental Documents is seeking to locate and identify documents of historical importance in Oriental scripts among the major collections of public and private papers in this country and to promote the publication of lists and guides to them. The aims and purpose of the Committee are briefly described in the first issue (1974) of the *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*.

BRITISH  
ACADEMY  
COMMITTEE  
ON ORIENTAL  
DOCUMENTS

This work naturally depends upon a supply of scholars with a specialist knowledge of such scripts and, preferably, with experience in historical research also. Already the Committee has successfully sponsored studies of documents in the Public Record Office, the India Office Library and Records, the British Library, and the Royal Commonwealth Society Library, written in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Turkish and in nineteenth-century Arabic, Burmese and Chinese. But much still remains to be done in the way of both discovering and rough-listing materials. Initial work of this kind might be undertaken as part of a higher degree or as a useful preliminary or adjunct to a publication based on such source materials. In some cases it would be desirable to prepare more detailed lists and calendars which the British Academy would publish. Limited grants are available each year to finance this work.

The purpose of this note is to draw attention to its importance, and the Secretary would be glad to hear from any one qualified who is interested in helping, whether or not such a person already has a particular collection or a specialist



study in mind. Enquiries should be addressed to : Dr. C. J. Kitching, Hon. Secretary, British Academy Oriental Documents Committee, Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1LR.

The following is a list of recent Library publications, consisting of reprints of articles which appeared in the latest

BULLETIN (Autumn 1974) :

“ Philo of Byblos and his ‘ Phoenician History ’ .” RECENT  
LIBRARY  
PUBLICA-  
TIONS  
By James Barr, M.A., B.D., F.B.A., Professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures in the University of Manchester. 8vo, pp. 52. Price 95p.

“ Henry Salt, Consul in Egypt 1816-27 and Pioneer Egyptologist.” By C. E. Bosworth, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Arabic Studies in the University of Manchester. 8vo, pp. 23. Price 55p.

“ The Synoptic Divorce Material As A Traditio-Historical Problem.” By David R. Catchpole, M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer in Religious Studies in the University of Lancaster. 8vo, pp. 37. Price 75p.

“ Two Great Venetian Libraries in the Age of Aldus Manutius.” By M. J. C. Lowry, M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer in History, The University of Warwick. 8vo, pp. 39. Price 75p.

“ Johnson’s Last Years With Mrs. Thrale: Facts and Problems.” By John C. Riely, Ph.D., Associate Research Editor, The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole’s Correspondence, Yale University. 8vo, pp. 17. Price 50p.

The following reprint consists of articles which appeared in the BULLETINS for Spring and Autumn 1974 :

“ The Spanish ‘ Generation of 1898 ’ .” By H. Ramsden, M.A., Dr. en Fil. y Let., Professor of Spanish Language and Literature in the University of Manchester. 8vo, pp. 58. Price 75p.

The following catalogue, recently published (1974) by Manchester University Press, may also be of interest to our readers :

“ Catalogue of Ethiopic Manuscripts in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester.” By Stefan Strelcyn. 8vo, xi, 116. With 10 plates. Price £4.95.

In the second half of 1974 the following donors made valuable gifts of books to the Library, and to them the Governors offer grateful thanks.

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Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati ; Historisches Museum, Schloss Thun.

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