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Kelmscott Books at Colby

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[Southworth] Press obtained its first out-of-the-state client . . . , Mr. Edward F. Stevens." And Mr. Stevens also figures in two interesting "association-items" recently added to the Colby Library—books which link the names of William Morris, John Ruskin, Bruce Rogers, and Edward F. Stevens, thus: In the list of Kelmscott Press publications that follow, No. 4 is "The Nature of Gothic" by John Ruskin. This is not the sole piece of evidence of Morris's interest in Ruskin's defence of Gothic, as the noblest style of architecture, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. At the time of our Ruskin exhibition a year ago, the only copy of *The Seven Lamps* possessed by the Colby Library was the first American edition, New York, 1854. Thanks to a generous and friendly act by Mr. Bruce Rogers, we now have copies of the first English edition, London, 1849, and of the second London edition, 1855. Both are beautifully inscribed: "Given to Colby Library | as a token of my long friendship with Edward F. Stevens | Bruce Rogers."—*Editor*.



KELMSCOTT BOOKS AT COLBY

BY VIVIAN M. MAXWELL, '44

IN an article on "Holdings of Incunabula in American University Libraries" (published in *The Library Quarterly*, July, 1939, pp. 273-284), Fremont Rider wrote: "Some weeks ago a member of the Wesleyan University faculty asked how our holdings of incunabula compared with those of other colleges and universities in the United States. . . . We proceeded to write to each of the . . . libraries . . . which we selected as at all likely to have incunabula. . . . The list speaks for itself."

In Mr. Rider's list COLBY COLLEGE appears near the bottom. Our library now contains two incunabula, but in New England alone thirteen colleges own more than two. Harvard has nearly two thousand.

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We show up better in a list of holdings of Kelmscott Press books. At the suggestion of Dr. Weber and in connection with the preparation of a course-paper on William Morris, I attempted to gather information as to how Colby Kelmscotts compare with those at other colleges and universities in New England.

With the advice of Librarian N. Orwin Rush, I wrote to each of the New England libraries selected as at all likely to have Kelmscott books. I included all the important public libraries in my list. The replies received indicate that, with a single exception (Number 46 in the list that follows), all the Kelmscott Press titles are available in one or another New England library. Fourteen libraries, other than COLBY, have reported Kelmscott holdings. Most of the replies received reported no Kelmscott Press books at all.

In my report I follow the "Annotated List of the Books Printed," as given in chronological order in the last publication of the Kelmscott Press.

1. *The Story of the Glittering Plain* by William Morris, 1891. 200 copies printed; the only Kelmscott book with washleather ties. The only copy in New England is at Harvard.

2. *Poems by the Way* by William Morris, 1891. 300 copies printed; the first Kelmscott book in two colors (black and red) and bound in limp vellum. There are copies at Brown, COLBY, Harvard, and Smith College.

3. *The Love-Lyrics and Songs of Proteus* by Wilfrid Scaven Blunt, 1892. 300 copies were printed; bound in stiff vellum. This is the only Kelmscott book in which the large initials are printed in red. This was done by the author's wish. COLBY has a copy. Other New England libraries which have copies are Dartmouth, Harvard, and Yale.

4. *The Nature of Gothic* by John Ruskin, 1892. Published by George Allen; 500 copies printed, of which four are in New England libraries: at Harvard, Mt. Holyoke, Wellesley, and Yale.

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5. *The Defence of Guenevere* by William Morris, 1892. The first Kelmscott book bound in limp vellum. 300 copies printed, of which Brown and Harvard Universities have two.

6. *A Dream of John Ball* by William Morris, 1892. Sold by Reeves and Turner, London. 300 copies were printed, of which Harvard has the only one in New England.

7. *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine, translated by William Caxton, 3 vols., 1892. Bound in boards, holland (linen) spine. From its use in these volumes the "Golden" type drew its name. 500 copies printed. Seven New England libraries have copies: Brown, COLBY, Harvard (two copies), Lowell City Library, Wellesley, Williams (Chapin Library), and Yale.

8. *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* by Raoul Lefevre, translated by William Caxton, 2 vols., 1892. This is a reprint of the first book printed in English, long a favorite with William Morris. It is the first Kelmscott book printed in "Troy" type. 300 copies printed, four of them now in New England: at COLBY, Harvard, Smith, and Williams (Chapin Library).

9. *Biblia Innocentium* by J. W. Mackail, 1892. The first Kelmscott book printed in octavo. 200 copies printed; Harvard has the only copy recorded in New England.

10. *The History of Reynard the Foxe* by William Caxton, printed in 1892, issued in 1893. The edges of this book and of all subsequent Kelmscott books were trimmed. 300 copies printed, six of them now in New England: at Brown, COLBY, Harvard (two copies), Williams (Chapin Library), and Yale.

11. *The Poems of William Shakespeare*, edited by F. S. Ellis, 1893. This has become one of the rarest books issued from the Kelmscott Press. 500 copies were printed; five have reached New England. COLBY has one. Other copies are at Amherst, Dartmouth, Harvard, and in the Haverhill Public Library.

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12. *News from Nowhere* by William Morris, 1893. Bound in limp vellum. 300 copies printed. Harvard has a copy, and there is another in the private library collected by the Portland publisher, Thomas B. Mosher.*

13. *The Order of Chivalry*, translated from the French by William Caxton, 1893. 225 copies printed; three now in New England: at Connecticut College for Women, Harvard, and Williams (Chapin Library).

14. *The Life of Thomas Wolsey* by George Cavendish, 1893. Harvard has the only copy in New England, of the 250 printed.

15. *The History of Godefrey of Boloyne*, reprinted from Caxton's edition of 1481, London, 1893. 300 copies printed. Harvard now has three copies; other New England copies at Connecticut College, Smith, and Williams (Chapin Library).

16. *Utopia* by Sir Thomas More, 1893. 300 copies printed; two now at Harvard, and a third New England copy at Radcliffe College.

17. *Maud* by Alfred Lord Tennyson, 1893. Published by Macmillan and Co. This book stands next to Shakespeare's *Poems* among the smaller Kelmescott books in the rarity with which it comes into the market. 500 copies printed; copies now at Brown, COLBY, and Harvard.

18. *Gothic Architecture*, a Lecture by William Morris, 1893. The four-line initials used in this little book appear here for the first time. 1500 copies were printed; only six have reached New England: at Brown, COLBY, Dartmouth, Harvard, Wellesley, and Thomas B. Mosher's library in Portland.

19. *Sidonia the Sorceress* by William Meinhold, translated by Lady Wilde, 1893. 300 copies printed, of which COLBY

* Information about T. B. Mosher's library has been added to Miss Maxwell's report by the editor. Her graduation in December, 1943, has made it impossible for her to bring her findings up to date and the Curator of Rare Books at Colby has therefore supplemented her report with further information whenever it was available.

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and Harvard have the only copies recorded in New England.

20. *Ballads and Narrative Poems, and Sonnets and Lyrical Poems*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1893. Two volumes. 310 copies printed. Brown and Harvard have copies of both volumes.

21. *The Tale of King Florus*, translated by William Morris from the French, 1893. 350 copies printed. Harvard and Wellesley have copies.

22. *The Story of the Glittering Plain* by William Morris, 1894. 250 copies printed, three of them now at Harvard.

23. *Of the Friendship of Amis and Amile*, done out of the ancient French by William Morris, 1894. 500 copies printed, five now located in New England: at Amherst, Harvard, Wellesley, and in T. B. Mosher's library (Portland, Maine), and in the private library of Professor Albert M. Turner of the University of Maine.

24. *The Poems of John Keats*, 1894. This has been described as "the most sought after of all the smaller Kelmscott Press books." 300 copies were printed; two are at Harvard, one at COLBY.

25. *Atalanta in Calydon* by Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1894. 250 copies printed; two now in New England, at Dartmouth and Harvard.

26. *The Tale of the Emperor Coustans*, done out of the ancient French by William Morris, 1894. 525 copies printed; four now in New England: at COLBY, Harvard, Wellesley, and in T. B. Mosher's library.

27. *The Wood beyond the World* by William Morris, 1894. 350 copies printed; Smith and Wellesley have the only New England copies.

28. *The Book of Wisdom and Lies*, stories from Asia, translated by Oliver Wardrop, from the original of Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani, 1894. 250 copies printed. The COLBY copy is the only one found in any New England library. Printed in black and red, this octavo volume carries a woodcut title-page.

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29. *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 3 vols., 1894-1895. Bound in limp vellum, without ties: the only Kelmscott book other than Rossetti's *Hand and Soul* (No. 36 below) bound in vellum without ties. Red ink is not used in Vol. I; it is used in Vol. II, and more sparingly in the third. 250 copies were printed. COLBY has the only copy found recorded anywhere in New England. (A set of the three volumes brought \$116 at auction in London last summer.—*Editor*.)

30. *Psalmi Penitentiales*, 1894. Seven Penitential Psalms edited by F. S. Ellis. 300 copies printed: Dartmouth and Harvard have copies.

31. *Epistola de Contemptu Mundi* by Frate Hieronymo da Ferrara, 1894. Only 150 copies printed; one is at Harvard.

32. *The Tale of Beowulf*, done out of the old English tongue by William Morris, 1895. 300 copies printed, of which four are recorded in New England: one at COLBY, two at Harvard, the fourth at Williams (Chapin Library).

33. *Syr Perceyvelle of Gales*, overseen by F. S. Ellis, after the edition edited by J. O. Halliwell from the Thornton MS. in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral, 1895. 350 copies printed; Harvard has a copy.

34. *The Life and Death of Jason* by William Morris, 1895. Only 200 copies of this large quarto were printed: COLBY and Williams (Chapin Library) have the only two copies in New England.

35. *Child Christopher* by William Morris, 2 vols., 1895. Of these 16mo. books, 600 copies were printed; copies in New England libraries: at Brown, COLBY, Connecticut College, Dartmouth, Harvard (two copies), Smith, Wellesley, and in the library of T. B. Mosher.

36. *Hand and Soul* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1895. Printed for Way & Williams of Chicago. This is the only Kelmscott book especially printed for America; bound in stiff vellum without ties. 300 copies were printed for the American publisher; 225 copies were printed for England. Three copies are now in New England. (The English and

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American copies have slightly different colophons. Copies at Harvard and at the University of New Hampshire have the Chicago imprint: "Sold by Way & Williams." The copy at Brown University was "sold by William Morris at the Kelmscott Press."—*Editor.*)

37. *Poems* by Robert Herrick, 1896. Only 250 copies printed. Dartmouth has the only New England copy.

38. *Poems* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1896. 300 copies printed; two copies now at Harvard.

39. *The Well at the World's End* by William Morris, 1896. 350 copies printed; Harvard and Smith College have the only two New England copies.

40. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 1896. With woodcut title-page and 87 illustrations designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones. This book is by far the most important achievement of the Kelmscott Press. It was a year and nine months in printing. 425 copies were printed on paper and 13 on vellum. On June 2, 1896, the first two copies were delivered to its producers, Burne-Jones and Morris. Morris's copy is now at Exeter College, Oxford. Henry Arthur Jones, in presenting one of the thirteen vellum copies to Harvard, called it "the loving handiwork of the greatest man I have known." Of the 425 copies on paper, only six are recorded in New England: at COLBY, Dartmouth, Harvard, Wellesley, Williams (Chapin Library), and Yale. (There is one leaf of the Kelmscott *Chaucer* at Amherst, and two leaves in the Bangor Public Library.) This book is said to be "generally accepted as the finest production of any modern press." (A copy sold at auction in New York in November, 1943, for \$975.—*Editor.*) A letter from Dr. Edward F. Stevens (Colby '89) urges the importance of recognizing that the brilliant achievement of the Kelmscott *Chaucer* is due not only to the genius of William Morris, but also to the distinguished art of Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and to the talented guidance of Sir Emery Walker, master-printer.

Each of the eighty-seven illustrations by Burne-Jones is

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surrounded by an ornamental border from the hand of Morris himself, and there is an abundance of ornamental initial words and letters. Speaking of "its paper firm and crisp to the touch . . . , its exquisite type, its careful press-work," A. L. Cotton once remarked: "this volume compels admiration even from those most disposed to cavil at the mediaevalism of the great designer. As a marvel of typography, it ranks with the very finest efforts of the past."

Colonel T. E. Lawrence numbered a Kelmscott *Chaucer* among his most treasured possessions, and G. Bernard Shaw once gave a copy to Rodin as a worthy gift to a great artist. And it is perhaps worth recording, in the midst of the present war, that, after the library of Tokyo University was destroyed by fire, the English scholars there acclaimed the Kelmscott *Chaucer* as a suitable key-book for presentation to the new library.

There can be no question as to the suitability of the presence of a Kelmscott *Chaucer* in the treasure room of the new library on Mayflower Hill.

41. *The Earthly Paradise* by William Morris, 8 vols., 1896-1897. 225 copies printed; four now in New England: at Harvard, Radcliffe, Smith, and in the private library of Thomas B. Mosher.

42. *Laudes Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Latin poems, 1896. The first Kelmscott book printed in three colors; the last book published by William Morris (he died October 3, 1896). 250 copies printed, of which COLBY, Harvard, and Wellesley have three.

43. *The Floure and the Leafe*, formerly attributed to Chaucer, now to Sir Thomas Clanvowe, 1896. 300 copies printed, of which three are in New England: two at Harvard, the third at Brown University.

44. *The Shepheardes Calendar* by Edmund Spenser, 1896. 225 copies printed, one of which is now at Harvard.

45. *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* by William Morris, 1897. 250 copies printed; Harvard and Smith have copies.

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46. Two Trial Pages of the Projected Edition of Lord Berners' Translation of Froissart's *Chronicles*, 1897. Morris's death made the completion of this work impossible. 160 copies were printed, of which *none* has reached a New England library.

47. *Sire Degrevaunt*, edited by F. S. Ellis, 1897. 350 copies printed; four now in New England: at Brown, COLBY, Harvard, and the Haverhill Public Library.

48. *Syr Ysambrace*, edited by F. S. Ellis, 1897, "from the MS. in Lincoln Cathedral." 350 copies printed; three now in New England: at Brown, COLBY, and Harvard.

49. *Some German Woodcuts of the Fifteenth Century*, being 35 reproductions from books that were in the library of the late William Morris, 1898. 225 copies printed; two are now at Harvard and Williams (Chapin Library).

50. *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung* by William Morris, 1898. 160 copies printed; Harvard has the only copy recorded in New England.

51. *The Sundering Flood* by William Morris, 1898. This was Morris's last romance. 300 copies were printed. Brown, Dartmouth, Harvard, Smith, and Yale have copies.

52. *Love is Enough* by William Morris, 1898. This was the second (and last) book printed in three colors at the Kelmscott Press. 300 copies were printed; Harvard alone has one.

53. *A Note* by William Morris on his Aims in founding the Kelmscott Press, together with a Short Description of the Press by S. C. Cockerell, and an Annotated List of the Books printed thereat, 1898. Octavo, "Golden" type, with five pages in "Troy" and "Chaucer" types. 525 copies were printed; copies at COLBY, Dartmouth, Harvard, Smith, Williams (Chapin Library), and in the private library of Thomas B. Mosher. "This was the last book printed at the KELMSCOTT PRESS."

