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Recent Acquisitions

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The books that I have been handling, and thinking about, and writing about, are far, far from being the useless, desiccated, sad relics of the past that A. C. Benson thought them to be. "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life," as a well-known Englishman said a little over three hundred years ago.

Sarah Orne Jewett, whose centenary we propose to celebrate next month, knew the proper attitude toward a book written by a great author: "His work," she once declared, "stands like a great cathedral in which the world may worship and be taught to pray, long after its tired architect goes home to rest."



RECENT ACQUISITIONS

COLERIDGE'S name was hardly mentioned last fall, when we (and others) were celebrating the sesquicentennial of *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth's achievements were applauded and appraised, but in almost every instance that has come to our attention, mention of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the famous book was made as if it were the sole work of William Wordsworth, ignoring Coleridge's contributions to it completely. Wordsworth himself is, of course, partly responsible for this. In 1800, when the second edition was published, he quietly appropriated the book, as far as the title-page is concerned. It was announced as *Lyrical Ballads with Other Poems by W. Wordsworth*. True, in both cases Wordsworth stated, in his prefatory remarks, that "a friend . . . furnished me with the Poems of the *Ancient Mariner*," etc., but the "friend" was not identified, and the *Ancient Mariner's* poem was kicked around on the table of contents, from one position to another, in highly undignified and uncomplimentary fashion. In the first edition the poem occupied first place; in

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the Second Edition (1800), it had been demoted to the twenty-third position among the titles; in the Third Edition (1802) and in the Fourth Edition (1805) it stood nineteenth in the list. Doubtless Coleridge himself was never consulted about any of these assignments.

A hundred years later, when the centenary of *Lyrical Ballads* was approaching, William Morris produced at the Kelmscott Press a neat volume of Coleridge's poems; but even this belated tribute paid to the author of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was a somewhat niggardly one; for not only did the book contain only thirteen of Coleridge's poems, but also it was the very *last* of Morris's printings of *Nineteenth-Century English Poets*—a series that included Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Rossetti, Swinburne, and (belatedly, only a few months before Morris's death) Coleridge. Three hundred copies of the book were printed, and it was published in April 1896. Of these three hundred, only three had made their way into New England libraries at the time of the sesquicentennial last fall; but the Colby Library Associates have now added a fourth copy—a splendid, fresh, clean example in Morris's favorite limp-vellum binding, a specimen that comes to Colby in practically the same state in which it left William Morris's hands. Late though we are for any sesquicentennial celebration, may the bones of the *Ancient Mariner* and the ghost of Samuel Taylor Coleridge both rest more quietly, now that a copy of the Kelmscott *Coleridge* is safely housed on Mayflower Hill!

ANOTHER recent acquisition is an eighteenth-century document—probably the finest specimen of German calligraphy in the Colby Library. It has been presented to the college by Mrs. Celia Hall Waterhouse, of Los Angeles, California, the daughter of Edward W. Hall who for thirty-seven years (from 1873 to 1910) was the Colby Librarian.

To name this hand-written document is easier than to describe it, and to describe it would be easier than to indi-

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cate, in the brief space that we have here at our disposal, all the numerous ramifications involved in this echo out of pre-French-Revolutionary days.

The history books tell us that Emperor Joseph II became ruler of Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary on the death of Maria Theresa on November 29, 1780. Joseph proved to be an enlightened monarch, and in 1781 he issued an edict improving the status of peasants in the German-Bohemian lands, and on November 1, 1781, he abolished serfdom in Bohemia. This country prospered and Prague became a cultured center of learning and industry. Five years later, a captain in Joseph II's private bodyguard, one Friedrich Gotthard Mirbach, who had given loyal service as a military man for sixteen years, asked to be relieved of his duties and allowed to retire to Bohemia. From his court in Vienna, Joseph granted this request. On the sixteenth of February, 1786, he signed a laudatory document, not only releasing Mirbach from further military duty but also elevating him to knighthood. This is the document that has now reached the Colby College Library. It grants Mirbach, and his heirs, and their heirs, "for ever," the right to add "von" to their name. This diploma, or letter (it is called by both names), further confers upon Friedrich Gotthard von Mirbach the right to use a shield or coat-of-arms which is not only described in detail but painted in vivid colors on one of the large parchment pages of the diploma. The document is accompanied by the imperial seal, impressed upon red wax, still sound and intact after the vicissitudes of one hundred and sixty-three years, the wax contained in a circular bronze receptacle or holder six inches in diameter.

Three years after his receipt of this document Friedrich von Mirbach presented it at Prague for validification, and on the tenth of March it was signed there by various Bohemian officials. What happened to the diploma between that date and the time when it turned up, recently, in California, we are unable to say. Joseph II who signed this di-

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ploma died in 1790 and a lot has happened in the world since then!

FROM Frederick B. Adams, Jr., Librarian of the Pierpont Morgan Library, we have received a photostat of a manuscript in his possession—a manuscript of Edwin Arlington Robinson's poem "The Growth of Lorraine" which shows an interesting variance from the text of this poem in the author's manuscript in the Colby College Library. The poem was first published in 1902 in *Captain Craig*, and in this book, as well as in all subsequent publications of the poem, the text follows the version of the Colby manuscript. The poem consists of two Italian sonnets. Line five of the second sonnet reads: "Dear friend, when you find this, I shall be dead." The photostat which Mr. Adams has sent us shows that, in *his* manuscript, this line reads: "When you see this, good friend, I shall be dead." This is obviously an earlier version than the Colby reading. Mr. Adams has reason to think that his manuscript was written on April 2, 1901. The date of the Colby manuscript is thus fixed somewhere between April 2, 1901, and the date in 1902 when *Captain Craig* was published.

IN addition to the acquisitions which we have been describing, a large number of books, letters, manuscripts, pamphlets, and magazines have come to us from a wide circle of friends and Library Associates. Space will not permit a listing of all the items we have received, but our thanks go to all the following benefactors:

The American-Irish Historical Society, Mr. Fred Anthoensen, Mr. Thomas Attaya, Mrs. Gertrude Gurney Barrows, Mr. Wilmon Brewer, Mrs. D. H. Bixler, President J. S. Bixler, the Boston Colby Club, Bowdoin College Library, Mrs. Kenneth Bragdon, Mr. I. R. Brussel, Mr. Frederick Robertson Bryson, Professor Margaret Buchner, Mrs. Carol Butler, Mr. Harold E. Clark, Professor John Clark, Mr. Cyril Clemens, Dr. Nathaniel Crosby, and Mr. John E. Cummings.

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Mr. and Mrs. Albert F. Drummond, Mr. M. H. Frank, Mr. Robie G. Frye, Mr. James P. Gardner, Professor Gordon Gates, Mr. G. Cecil Goddard, Mr. C. M. Goethe, Mr. Harry F. Guggenheim, Mr. Harold E. Hall, Mr. Benton L. Hatch, Miss Julie Hudson, Rev. John T. Knight, Mr. William W. McKee, Mr. James A. Healy, Mr. J. J. Levison, and Professor Donaldson Koons.

Mr. Caleb Lewis, Mr. A. W. Locke, Maine Historical Society, Maine State Library, Dr. Mary H. Marshall, Mr. Louis I. Newman, Mr. A. R. Nykl, Rev. F. W. O'Brien, Dr. Charles Hovey Pepper, Dr. John L. Perry, Miss Margaret Perry, Mr. George Pettigrew, Mrs. George P. Phenex, Portland Public Library, and Mrs. Harold Trowbridge Pulsifer.

Dr. Herman T. Radin, Mr. H. Paul Rancourt, Mr. and Mrs. John Reed, Miss Mary Louise Rowe, Mr. Karekin Sahagian, Mr. Porter Sargent, Mr. Richardson Savell, Rev. John H. Scammon, Mrs. Donald Smith, Mr. Joseph Coburn Smith, Mr. Raymond Spinney, Dr. Edward F. Stevens, Dr. John H. Strong, Mr. Reginald Sturtevant, Mr. Paul R. Sweet, Miss Elizabeth Thorne, Miss Nancy Byrd Turner, the University of Michigan, the University of Chicago Press, Mr. Bertram H. Wentworth, Mr. Lewis G. Whipple, Misses Caroline and Adelaide Wing, and Mr. Ivan Yeaton.

THE centenary of SARAH ORNE JEWETT has been mentioned on page 184. That anniversary will arrive on September 3, on which date the Colby College Press proposes to publish a centennial *Bibliography of the Published Writings of Sarah Orne Jewett*—the first full-length bibliography she will have had in all her hundred years. Librarian Humphry, business manager of the Press, has already received dozens of orders for this book, as the result of his announcement of this forthcoming publication last spring. Since the size of the edition will be limited, orders should not be delayed. The book will contain generous quotations from critics and reviewers of Miss Jewett's work, and admirers of *The Country of the Pointed Firs* will find the Colby anniversary volume as delightful to read as it will be useful to consult.