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Notes by the Way

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clair Lewis, Hemingway, Dos Passos, and their like, there is only profound cynicism and spiritual aridity. Much modern American poetry has sunk to "rhetorical tinklings . . . of self-satisfied aesthetes." Like our modern fiction, it has scorned to supply the spiritual needs of American life. Ours is largely a literature without a message or even a pattern, and there is little health in it.

Many readers will grind their teeth and call Professor Weber a blind reactionary (or Fascist), who does not comprehend Dreiser's deep morality and Hemingway's complicated code and Dos Passos' social significance. Others will complain that Mr. Weber violates front-parlor manners in the vehemence and dead-seriousness of his argument. But many will sing a song of thanksgiving at hearing him speak out with the small but growing group of critics who insist that it is high time to reassess the values of H. L. Mencken, on which we have coasted so long and with such tragic aimlessness — critics who demand that literature not merely be, but mean.

In any event, no one can read the last chapters of *Hardy in America* without being stimulated to thought and to considerable emotion of one sort or another. These chapters are ably documented and clearly argued; and they contain more than a modicum of dynamite.



NOTES BY THE WAY

THE Colby exhibition held a year ago on the occasion of the bicentenary of the death of Jonathan Swift was mentioned in the Spring (1946) issue of *The Library Chronicle* of the University of Texas.

President Bixler's widely discussed *Conversations with an Unrepentant Liberal* was reviewed in the *New York Times* on August 11 by a discerning critic who averred that "these conversations are far more interesting, I think, than those of Cebes and Simmias in Plato's *Phaedo*."

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The Kelmscott books listed on previous pages are now stored in one of two splendid old bookcases which have come to the Treasure Room from the home of William James. They are the gift of Miss Elizabeth S. Edwards, of Albany, New York.

A copy of *The Praise of Folly* by Erasmus (as translated by John Wilson) has been presented by Dr. Herman T. Radin of New York City. He has also made further contributions to the Hardy Collection.

Among David Libbey's latest additions to our Hardy Collection, the typescript of a French play calls for special mention. Sergeant Libbey saw the play at the Theatre Antoine in Paris during the period of his military service abroad, and by resourceful and active efforts he obtained for us the typescript of the unpublished work, *Tess D'Urberville*, a play in four acts and eight tableaux, by Roger-Ferdinand, adapted from the novel by Thomas Hardy. The date of Sergeant Libbey's program of the play is January 3, 1945.

Dr. Cecil W. Clark has increased the number of fore-edge paintings in the Rare Book Room by giving us a copy of *Select Pieces from the Poems of William Wordsworth*, London, Edward Moxon, 1845, with a vanishing scene on its fore-edges.

At Commencement time last June and during the mid-summer "open house" week on Mayflower Hill, the library had on exhibition samples of fine printing covering nearly eight hundred years. A catalogue of the exhibition has been printed, and any member of the Colby Library Associates who has not already received a copy may obtain one free by writing to the librarian and asking for it. The catalogue reproduces the big initial two-colored "B" from the magnificent *Psalter* printed in 1457 by Gutenberg's successors in Mainz, Fust and Schoeffer. This decorative initial was the first ever to be printed in color, for Gutenberg's rubricated initial letters were done by hand. The catalogue contains a descriptive check-list of fifty items, beginning with our example of Chinese printing of nearly eight hundred years

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ago and coming down to artistic products of the printing press in 1946.

A generation after Gutenberg, the most important printing establishment in Germany was that of Anton Koberger in Nuremberg. By the generosity of Dr. Hugh L. Robinson, '18, we have received a copy of Volume IV of Koberger's Latin Bible, completed on April 12, 1493. According to the Second Census of Incunabula in America, there are only nine other copies of this book in the United States; four are in seminaries, two in universities; one in a historical society's library and one in the Library of Congress. Trinity College is the only other American college to record ownership of a copy of this fine Bible. It is equipped with notes and comments by Nicolas de Lyra (1270-1340).

Thanks to the generous gift of Arthur G. Robinson, '06, we have also received another book of Biblical commentary, *Moralia super totam Bibliam*, by the same Nicolas de Lyra. Copies of this work were printed in Italy as early as 1481; ours is probably of a later date, and may be of German rather than Italian origin. The concluding pages of the book are defective, and this fact has made it thus far impossible to establish either the exact date of the printing or the name of the publisher. But there seems to be reason to believe that the Colby copy is unique in American libraries; at least we have, after considerable searching and much correspondence, failed to find its twin anywhere.

On November 1 we expect to open an exhibition of books designed by Mr. Fred Anthoensen and printed by The Southworth-Anthoensen Press of Portland. Later in that same month we hope to exhibit the Fifty Books of the Year 1945, as selected by the "jury" of the American Institute of Graphic Arts.

The American Institute of Graphic Arts has been selecting the Fifty Books of the Year for twenty years or more. In 1926 one of the books chosen by the judges was *A Book of Old Maps*, edited by E. D. Fite, printed by William Edwin Rudge at Mount Vernon, New York, and published by the

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Harvard University Press. A copy of this splendidly printed work has been presented to the Colby Library by Dr. Charles W. Spenser, '90. Would the Class of 1926 like to give us the other volumes in the list of the Fifty Books of the Year 1926?

Dr. Walter T. Peirce of Santa Barbara, California, has added to our Hardy Collection a copy of *The Homeland Handbook on Dorchester and its Surroundings* by F. R. and Sidney Heath, 1905.

From Mr. Donald Brien, of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, we have received transcripts of two characteristic letters by Henry James, the originals of which are now in Mr. Brien's possession.

From Mrs. Guy Warren Walker, of Northeast Harbor, Maine, we have received a mint copy of *Boston after Bulfinch* by Walter H. Kilham, presented after an inspection of Professor Green's exhibition of Maine architecture.

From Mr. Karl R. Kennison, '06, we have received a five-year file of the Gardiner (Maine) *Christian Intelligencer*, 1827-1831, and a copy of the *London Morning Post Gazetteer* for November 15, 1800 — printed at a time when Napoleon was leaving footprints for Hitler to follow later.

Several extensive contributions to our growing Abbott Collection have been received. Mr. John B. R. Lyons, of Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, has sent us a thirteen-volume set, and Miss Anna M. Boynton, '06, of Camden, has sent us an eleven-volume set, of the Little Rollo books. We are now eager to have Rollo joined by his cousins and friends, Lucy and Jonas and Florence and Caleb. Books about any of these Abbott creations will be welcome. Will you look your attic over? Mr. Ben Stinchfield, of Farmington Falls, Maine (not far from Jacob Abbott's old home), has given us a set that includes all but three of Abbott's Franconia Stories. The three titles missing from the lot are *Malleville*, *Mary Bell*, and *Rodolphus*. Mr. Stinchfield has also given us a first edition of one of the Rollo books and two of the Abbott histories — one of American history, the

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other of ancient Persian history. Mr. John Lyons has also sent us a copy of one of Abbott's Little Learner series. By this sort of general co-operative interest and generosity our Abbott Collection has been brought well within sight of its goal — namely, possession of all of the two hundred-odd books which this author wrote. Among the most elusive titles are those of the Juno Stories — four volumes which Abbott published in 1870. To date we have not come upon any of them.

In December we propose to observe the fiftieth anniversary of the "publication" of Edwin Arlington Robinson's famous initial work, *The Torrent and The Night Before*. The Library Associates will hold a special meeting to observe the anniversary. On this occasion we would like to report the results of an investigation into the number and the present whereabouts of copies of *The Torrent*. Robinson himself stated that, "to be exact," 312 copies were printed by the Riverside Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts; and in 1930 he thought that "something like half that number may have been lost or destroyed." That would leave 156 copies to be accounted for. Some of these have already been traced to public or institutional libraries; others have been located in private hands. But there are still many unaccounted for. Will you help in this search? If any reader of these words owns, or knows about the ownership of, a copy of *The Torrent*, he is urgently requested to communicate with the editor of this QUARTERLY, unless he has already been in correspondence with the editor on this subject. If possible, the next issue of this periodical will contain a census of extant copies of *The Torrent*. Fifty years ago, when Robinson was mailing out from his home in Gardiner, Maine, copies of this "unwelcome little volume," as he later called it, printed at his own expense — (the bill was \$52) — he little thought that, half a century later, copies would be so eagerly sought as to raise the price of a single copy up into the hundreds of dollars. The copies at Colby will of course be on exhibition in December.

