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The Centenary of "A Christmas Carol"

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Commerce, Christianity, and Civilization versus British Free Trade: Letters in reply to the London Times (pp. 36), 1876.

Resumption — When and How will it End? (pp. 12), 1877.

Our collection does not as yet contain any of the numerous articles contributed by Carey to newspapers and magazines from 1835 to 1879.

THE CENTENARY OF "A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

A FEW days before Christmas, 1843, the first edition of Dickens's most famous story appeared. Six thousand copies were sold the same day. The Colby library did not buy a copy, then when the price was five shillings; and now, when a copy might cost over five hundred dollars, we can not buy one. For want of "the real thing," the library observed the centenary of the famous story by exhibiting a splendid facsimile, published by the Atlantic Monthly Press in 1920. This copy reproduced the rich red cloth binding, the gilt edges, the title-page in two colors (red and blue), and the four full-page engraved illustrations by John Leech. These were, in the original, expertly colored by hand — in red, yellow, green, and blue — and in the facsimile are surprisingly well done.

For a hundred years this book has been spreading its glad influence throughout the world. Lord Jeffrey, Dickens's friend, once declared that it had done more good than all the pulpits in Christendom. Thackeray referred to it as a national benefit, and A. Edward Newton, who wrote the introduction for the facsimile edition, called it "the best book of its kind in the world." The manuscript of the Carol is now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City; the librarian there is reported to have said that it is one of the items that almost all visitors to the Morgan Library wish to see.
In addition to the facsimile of the first edition, the library exhibited *A Christmas Carol* as published in Boston by Estes & Lauriat in 1882. Why exhibit this edition? The title-page is autographed “Edward Robinson”; he was the father of the poet Edwin Arlington Robinson. Also included in the centenary exhibition was a copy of G. K. Chesterton’s essay on “Dickens and Christmas” inscribed “Ruth Robinson from Uncle Win. Christmas, 1908.” Uncle Win was, of course, Edwin Arlington Robinson; his niece, Mrs. William Nivison, to whom the Colby Library is indebted for these books.

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**TWO WORDSWORTH LETTERS**

*By Alice Pattee Comparetti*

The Colby College Library has recently acquired two original letters by William Wordsworth. The first of these was written from Rydal Mount in 1820, an interesting year in the poet’s life, a year which he commemorated in the title of a group of poems, *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820*. The letter refers to an affair of business, and is interesting both in the glimpse it gives us of the practical side of the man of letters, and in the fact that it was written by a great poet. The handwriting is, in itself, an exciting reality. We quote the letter here, because it has never been published:

Rydale Mount
Monday 16th [October] 1820

Dear Sir,

I do not like to let the land at the rent proposed by Bewsher, because I think it would affect the letting of the whole next year.

I prefer its being retained in my hands, and let as meadow when the grass is fit to cut. As the crop will be