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TWO ANNIVERSARIES

THOMAS BEWICK was born near Newcastle, England, on August 12, 1753. From the time he was thirty until his death in 1828, he was busily engaged in the creation of woodcuts or wood-engravings (he himself made no distinction in the use of these two terms). On August 12, 1953—two hundred years after the birth of this man who has now come to be generally regarded as one of the most famous and most expert wood-engravers of all time—the Colby College Library is glad to be able to exhibit seven of the original blocks cut by him. As announced in our issue for May 1949, these blocks were presented to the Library by Mr. T. Raymond Pierce, '98, of Wellesley, Massachusetts. Six of the cuts have been reproduced from time to time in our pages: the cat in a tub drifting out to sea (page 159, May 1949), Caesar and the Slave (page 174, August 1949), the hungry bird near a snow-drifted house (page 206, November 1949), a rotting boat on a rocky shore (page 244, August 1950), a man on stilts crossing a snow drift (page 49, August 1951), and a wind-beaten couple crossing a bleak heath (page 77, February 1952).

The Colby Library Associates recently purchased for us a copy of *The Fables of Aesop and Others, with Designs on Wood* by Thomas Bewick (London, Longman and Co., 1818). On opening this book, we were delighted to find on page 177 "Caesar and the Slave" as printed so long ago with what is now our piece of wood, and on page 54 we found our "man on stilts." We wonder how many impressions were made from these little pieces of Newcastle wood before they came to Colby College. Bewick himself once claimed...
that "above 900,000" impressions were made from a block he had cut for a newspaper "many years before."

Among our recently acquired items, arriving just in time to adorn our celebration of this Bewick anniversary, is a delightfully printed edition of Llewelyn Powys's *Thomas Bewick* (Lexington, Kentucky, The Gravesend Press, 1951), in which sixteen Bewick engravings from the collection of R. Hunter Middleton, of Chicago, are reproduced. This attractive little book was designed by Joseph C. Graves, founder of the Gravesend Press. Kentucky and Maine unite in honoring the engraver of Newcastle.

One of Bewick's publishers (William Bulmer) once remarked of these wood blocks: "They have been executed with great care, and I may venture to say . . . that they form the most extraordinary effort of the art of engraving upon wood that ever was produced in any age or any country." We are glad, therefore, to be able, upon this bicentenary of Thomas Bewick's birth, to reproduce here his game-bearing man making his way home, followed by his dog—the seventh in our Colby Collection of Bewick cuts. Only those who have been able to examine the original block of wood, now blackened with printer's ink, can conceive of the delicacy of the tiny scratches that enabled Bewick to suggest the home of the hunter, with the inviting smoke rising from its chimney.
Our other anniversary is the Jubilee of the Cuala Press of Dublin, Ireland. Fifty years ago—on July 16, 1903, to be exact—325 copies of a little book entitled *In the Seven Woods* by William Butler Yeats issued from a small press in Dublin operated by Yeats's sister Elizabeth. This was the beginning of the Cuala Press. In the fifty years since then, it has turned out nearly four-score volumes; and thanks to the generous benefaction of Mr. James A. Healy, of Portland and New York, the Colby College Library possesses a complete file of these books, and on this Jubilee occasion is proud to be able to exhibit them.

The books were never produced in great quantity: sometimes 150 copies were printed, sometimes two or three hundred, but never more than 500 copies. By the date of this half-century anniversary, these books have become extremely hard to acquire, and Colby is indeed fortunate in having been able to come into possession of them without expense and without labor. The limited supply accounts for the limited knowledge that even the world of book-lovers has about the Cuala volumes—in many instances even the authors and titles cannot be regarded as commonly known. For this reason we are particularly happy to print some of the instructive remarks made by Dean Ernest C. Marriner at a “Cuala Jubilee” meeting of the Colby Library Associates.

**FIFTY YEARS OF THE CUALA PRESS***

*By Ernest C. Marriner*

Thanks to that devoted friend of the Colby College Library, James A. Healy, visitors to the Robinson Treasure Room this month can see one of the finest and most complete collections of the Cuala Press books and

*This is a somewhat abbreviated form of the address read by Dean Marriner at a meeting of the Colby Library Associates on May 1, 1953, on the occasion of the opening of a Jubilee Exhibition of the books and prints of the Cuala Press, 1903-1953.*