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Some Noteworthy Recent Gifts

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the only one known; they refer to our “unique copy” of The Real Thing; on page 214 they reproduce, as an illustration in their book, a Colby item which (on page 215) they call “an important piece”; they note that our copy of Guy Domville is one of only five, that our copy of The Other House is one of only three, and that we share with Harvard the proud possession of a copy of the so-called “70th Birthday Letter.” Etc., etc.

The four hundred and more pages of this book are packed full of information, and no student of Henry James will henceforth dare to work without the constant aid of this authoritative compilation. We are proud to find the Colby Collection in it; we hail the publication of the book as a splendid achievement, in spite of the fact that the clerk (or whoever he was) who made the Index didn’t do a very thorough job from our admittedly prejudiced point of view. A reading of these scholarly pages (apart from the Index!) arouses anew our vivid sense of indebtedness to Mr. H. B. Collamore.

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SOME NOTEWORTHY RECENT GIFTS

From Mr. Walter Beinecke, Jr., of New York City, we have received a “mint” vellum-bound copy of the privately-printed edition of Thomas Hardy’s An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress. This is Copy No. 16 of an edition limited to one hundred copies printed at the Curwen Press, Plaistow, England. It is inscribed “To J. W. Mackail from Florence Hardy October 1934.” John William Mackail (1859-1945) was the author of the biographical sketch of Hardy which was printed in the Order of Proceedings at the unveiling of the memorial statue of Hardy at Dorchester, three years before the date of Mrs. Hardy’s gift of this book. Mackail was the son-in-law of Sir Edward Burne-Jones.
Mr. Beinecke has also given us two other welcome additions to our Hardy Collection. On January 22, 1924, in preparation for the centenary of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Hardy wrote a poem entitled “Compassion,” intending it for inclusion in the society’s centenary volume, *A Century of Work for Animals*. The poem was duly printed in the book, but it was also printed in the London *Times*, June 16, 1924 (page 15), together with a statement that the author did not reserve copyright in the poem. This announcement led to immediate separate reprints, and it is two of these that Mr. Beinecke has just given us. A. J. A. Symons rushed fifty numbered copies into print on the same day as the *Times* printing; Mr. Beinecke’s gift is Copy No. 10, the numbered limitation being signed by A. J. A. Symons. This sixteen-page pamphlet was printed at the Morland Press in London, and this copy was originally presented by Symons to Dr. George Charles Williamson.

The other copy of “Compassion” is similar. Symons at this date was directing The First Edition Club, which published a little periodical called *The First Edition and Book Collector*. To encourage subscriptions, Symons offered a copy of Hardy’s poem to “the first subscribers” to the periodical. Fifty copies were “privately printed” for this purpose, the type being wholly reset. Mr. Beinecke’s gift is No. 22 of these fifty copies.

To Mrs. David Terry Martin, of Stillwater, Oklahoma, we are indebted for an autograph letter which Baedeker would have called one with three-starred interest—one star for the writer, one for the recipient, and one for the relative of the recipient who presented the letter to our donor. The letter was written by the famous John Ruskin to the poet William Cox Bennett (1820-1895), from whose hands it descended to those of Sir Sydney Cockerell, who wrote the following certification on the envelope in which the letter was mailed: “Addressed to my great-uncle
I

Ruskin failed to write either year or place on his letter, but the envelope is postmarked London December 26 [1860],” and is addressed to

W. C. Bennett Esq.
The Circus, Greenwich

26th December [1860]

Dear Mr Bennett

Christmas visits and Christmas thoughts, coming in crowds, admit hardly of any due or kind return in acceptable time: but pray believe in my sincerity of thanks for your beautiful little book. I am very glad to have the detached poems in this form. I will also endeavor to see the pictures of Mr Benton of which you speak so highly and I doubt not, justly.

I admire more and more the gentle and loving mind which displays itself in all your writings, and with most true wishes that you may long enjoy what you enjoy and love what you love, remain with all Christmas warmth of salutation,

gratefully yours,

J. Ruskin.

Ruskin’s reference to “all your writings” implies his familiarity with Bennett’s previously published books of poetry—Poems (1850), War Songs (1855), Queen Eleanor’s Vengeance and Other Poems (1857), and Songs by a Song-writer (1859)—but his mention of a “beautiful little book” of “detached poems in this form” encourages the idea that the Christmas present received by Ruskin in 1860 was not a copy of any of the books just mentioned, but a collection of separate sheets such as Bennett is known to have sent to Sir T. N. Talfourd—sheets which are now in the British Museum and are there catalogued “A Collection of Short Poems, printed on Single Sheets [1840-50?].” The British Museum cataloguer was uncertain as to the date of printing of these poems by William Cox Bennett, and it is therefore possible that John Ruskin’s letter of 1860 provides a clue to their date. Or, if the British Museum’s conjectured date is correct, Bennett was presenting
Ruskin, not with a new product, but with a copy of some privately printed poems which he had had on hand for some years. In any case, we are happy to have this letter of Ruskin's, with its "Christmas warmth of salutation," and are grateful to Mrs. Martin for this first (and as yet sole) example of a Ruskin autograph to reach the Colby Library.

To Mrs. Terry Martin the Library is also indebted for three holograph letters of Laurence Housman; they are dated February 29, 1944, June 13, 1947, and July 30, 1947, and have to do with various books by Housman. In one of the letters he laments that "I do not control the copyright of some of my books which have been published in America," and in another he exclaims: "It rejoiced my heart to hear that you admire The Were Wolf." In the third letter Housman remarks: "I was brought up with a lot of afflicting Victorian repressions, against which I soon began to rebel when I grew up, and have been rebelling ever since."

To Miss Irene Cooper Willis, of Nutley, Sussex, England, the Library is indebted for an extensive addition to the collection of books and letters of Violet Paget ("Vernon Lee") which Miss Willis presented to Colby in 1952 (see "The Vernon Lee Papers" by F. Elizabeth Libbey in the COLBY LIBRARY QUARTERLY, November 1952, pages 117-119 and 123-129). On pages 127-129 of the issue announcing the original gift, the names of more than a hundred of Miss Paget's correspondents were listed, from each one of whom there was at least one letter in the collection, in many cases many letters, and in some cases hundreds of letters. In the course of the past six years, we have printed the text of some of these letters in the pages of this quarterly; they have served to illustrate the variety and the extent of Miss Paget's correspondence, but what we have been able to print has been no more than a slight illustration of the wealth of the Vernon Lee Collection.
Similarly, Miss Cooper Willis's 1958 supplement to the original gift is no minor addendum, and in this brief announcement there is no possibility of indicating the importance of the material that has now come to the Colby College Library. The books include first editions, presentation copies, autographed and annotated copies; and the files of correspondence, almost all of it unpublished, is as rich and as varied as was the correspondence received six years ago. The letters are in English and French, in Italian and German, and no mere listing of names, such as we shall attempt here, can indicate the value of these letters to students of history and government, art and literature, psychology and music, in all of which fields Vernon Lee was interested and in all of which she wrote and published. The letters were written over a period of more than fifty years, the earliest being dated 1881, when Violet Paget was only 25. A number have to do with her books. Shortly after Christmas, 1884, for example, W. Cosmo Monkhouse wrote: "My candid opinion of Miss Brown [Vernon Lee's novel] is that it is very nasty." There are 25 letters from Dame Ethel M. Smyth, in one of which she discusses Henry James's technique as a novelist. Let me quote a paragraph from it:

"I was delighted to get your letter, chock full of interesting points to discuss when we meet... You answered so many much more interesting things than my actual question that I don't complain of still being in the dark as to whether you agree with me. Roughly it is this: you talk of Henry James's technique—but technique is always a slave, or ought to be. When the slaves rise and slay their master, what then? I meant, in alluding to H. J., that this had happened. Whether his technique, cultivated in an unwholesome way, has gradually absorbed all there is of his vitality, so that the ideas behind got crushed out (and I think this is so—but then I am vengerous and want to punish an artist when he loses his best instincts), or wheth-

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er the ideas, the power of seeing visions, went first and left a large empty place for the exclusive cultivation of verbiage, I don’t know. Just read the ... Introduction of his to H. Crackanthorpe’s posthumous Studies. If this be ‘technique’, heaven save you all from it. No one shall persuade me that in any art (except the laying out of Labyrinths, which I fear is no longer practiced) indirectness of expression, willful confusedness like this sample [from the Introduction], will take anyone to heaven. It certainly indirectly will take me to hell, for I get inward swearing fits at this sort of thing:"

But any attempt here to go into further details is hopeless. We are forced to content ourselves with a mere listing of the names of those who wrote the letters:

Miss Alice Abadam
Ettoire and Emilia Ariani
Maude (Mrs. Alfred) Benn
Baroness Knut Boudé
Sir Evan Charteris
Mme Plana Farina Cini
Mrs. Sophia Lucy Clifford
Frances P. Cobbe
Mrs. James Darmesteter
Louisa De la Ramée (“Ouida”)
Gabrielle Delzant
Prof. Edward Dent
Mme Emile Duclaux
H. S. Ede
Miss E. Evans
Mrs. Karl (Jessie) Hillebrand
Lilian Anna Hunting
Annabel (Mrs Huth) Jackson
Henry James
Andrew Lang
Betty Lewis
Mrs. E. Lynn Linton
Mme Louis Loviot

Ellinor Macafe
J. B. Manson
W. Cosmo Monkhouse
Mme Berthe Noufflard
Violet Ormond
Walter Pater
Mario Pindesi
David Piper
Carlo Placci
Caroline E. Playne
Frances Poynter
Mabel T. M. Price
Flora Priestley
F. Mabel Robinson
Mary Robinson
Emily Sargent
John Singer Sargent
William Sharp
Dame Ethel Smyth
Mrs. Marie Stillman
Mona Taylor
J. Arthur Watson
Evelyn Wimbush

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