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When ill health forced Dr. Pepper to resign the presidency in 1889, he did not sever his ties with Colby. Three years later, he returned to the college and resumed active work as Professor of Biblical Literature. He held this position until 1900, when he retired from teaching in order to devote his full time to writing for religious magazines and newspapers.

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THE CHRONICLE AND THE CHEERFUL PIRATE

By Donald H. Williams

There is a curious little sequel to the history of Colby's Liber Chronicarum, as related by Morris Schertz in Colby Library Quarterly of March 1960. Recent correspondence from Miss Ellen Shaffer (author of The Nuremberg Chronicle, Los Angeles, 1950) has unwittingly suggested a brief commentary which may be of some interest to readers of this periodical.

In his splendid account of Colby's incunabula, Mr. Schertz described the Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493. The ubiquitous Chronicle must have been a "best seller" in the last decade of the 15th century. In referring to the first (Latin) edition of the 1493 Chronicle, Winship has said, "it must fairly claim to be the most widely known edition of a book of all time."¹ He considered it, even in 1940, to be the most common 15th century publication we have in America.

The Chronicle most familiar to us is the first edition of 1493, a copy of which is in Colby's Edwin Arlington Robinson Room, but the book was reprinted — both with and without authorization. After the two 1493 Nuremberg printings, in Latin and German, respectively, the Chronicle was pirated in three separate editions by Johann Schonsperger of Augsburg. According to Miss Shaffer, "Schonsperger was a cheerful pirate who was rather good at this activity — he also pirated the Hortus Santitatis."² Stillwell is authority for citing Schonsperger's pirated

¹ George Winship, Printing in the 15th Century (Philadelphia, 1940), 64.
² Ellen Shaffer in a personal letter, October 1960.
German edition of 1496 (S 284), a Latin edition of 1497 (S 282), and another German edition of 1500 (S 285). The 1497 Chronicle appears at first glance to be a smaller version of the original. There is the same profusion of woodcuts but they are by different artists than those in the 1493 book, the art work being much inferior in the Augsburg editions. It is quite unlikely that Schonsperger had access to Koberger’s cuts. Neither could the 1493 woodcuts have been used in the smaller format of 1497. Schonsperger went to two columns and used a gothic-like face. It was not quite the pure heavy black-letter of true gothic, but was very slightly more slender or cursive, but certainly more gothic than anything else.

In contrast with the Germanic proportions of Colby’s first edition, the author’s copy of the 1497 edition measures approximately 8” x 12”, although rebinding may have cost the book some page size. This copy contains well over 1800 woodcuts, of which about 100 are of cities. There is a double-page map of Germany and a half-page map of the world. It has 366 leaves, including the Register. So, in reality quite a different physical book in all respects from the original Koberger printing of 1493 described by Schertz.

Schonsperger in his colophon acknowledges the “piracy,” giving the place and year of printing. He was already a famous printer in Augsburg, and early in the 16th century was connected with Emperor Maximilian I, for whom he printed a prayer book. Koberger, meanwhile, after a brilliant career as another of the truly great printers and booksellers of the 15th century, became a publisher only at about the turn of the century.

Piracy was apparently commonplace in that stirring first half-century of printing. With all due respect to the titan Koberger, Schonsperger as a cheerful pirate leaves us with something of a debt for his contribution to the spread of learning in the late 15th century, and his three pirated reprints attest to the popularity of the important book in the Colby collection.

3 M. B. Stillwell, Incunabula in American Libraries (New York, 1940), 452, 453.