The QUARITO

Prepared in the Interests of Book Collecting at the University of Michigan

No. 1

To Friends Who Receive “The Quarto”

The libraries of the University of Michigan have been built up, even created, by the happy co-ordination of two forces: far-seeing administrative policies of the University and generosity of book collecting alumni. The General Library’s finest collections were gifts of enthusiastic alumni. The Clements Library represents the fervent collecting in the field of Americana of one alumnus supplemented by gifts from other collectors. Each library on the campus depends in large measure on its friends for its greater treasures.

It is time, we think, these book collectors among the alumni and friends of the University receive some informal report on what the University Libraries are doing with their special collections. We therefore propose to issue The Quarto as a news sheet for the dissemination of interesting information about books, manuscripts, newspapers, maps, and prints. We librarians and curators here on the campus have a lot of fun with the treasures in our custody. You collectors have a lot of fun tracking down and acquiring the items you collect. We think we can double your enjoyment and ours by sharing our bibliographical adventures and anecdotes.

The Quarto will be sent free of charge to all persons interested in collecting at the University of Michigan. Our initial mailing list is made up of those friends who have demonstrated that interest by making themselves known at the libraries in Ann Arbor. Others who may wish to receive The Quarto need only write to the Editors and declare their interest.

“Yet no one can justly appreciate the value of existing information who does not know by what exertions it has been acquired. No man can rightly estimate any truth who is not aware of the previous errors through which the way to it has led . . .” (Johann Georg Kohl)

Most of the stories we tell and the queries we make necessarily emanate from the campus libraries. But we shall welcome short contributions from readers on any “points” of collecting or of bibliography which they think will interest the rest of the readers.

There is a great deal of talk, not only here at the University, but elsewhere over the land, about saving the Humanities in war time, about preserving a liberal education in the face of the demands of war, which, naturally, emphasize the necessity for technological training. These two somewhat unrelated thoughts, the need for more alumni-wide knowledge about the University’s book collections and the need for conserving the Humanities, struck us at the same time; the result of that mental collision is The Quarto.

A major depression, followed by a war of unprecedented proportions, has shifted, and will continue to shift, all the bases of our social structure. In the changes round about us and in the readjustments which are easily foreseeable, the materials of our cultural heritage are likely, insofar as they survive at all, to change hands to some extent. Those who are watching over the University of Michigan libraries are observing this phenomenon with considerable interest, for in the past much of our collecting as a University has been sporadic and sometimes even fortuitous. With treasures changing hands rapidly, day by day, the libraries are certain to receive much by purchase and by gift and each library is determined to acquire the best of the past and the present for the future.

The Quarto is intended as a record of today’s news about the contents of the University libraries and of the book collecting activities of the University and its friends. It is intended to show how, in the University libraries, we have built great collections and to show in what particulars we have not succeeded in acquiring all we need. We hope The Quarto will reach all those friends of ours who are interested in our libraries. We hope, too, that The Quarto will answer the questions of our friends about what we are doing and what we want done for book collecting at the University of Michigan.

A.D. 1543

In the University’s noteworthy collections on the history of astronomy, the presence of the first edition of Copernicus, De Revolutionibus Orbis, Nuremberg, 1543, reminds us of this 400th anniversary. In discussing a globe before him, the great Polish astronomer remarked that it would be much clearer if the newly discovered continent of America had been located on it. Our copy was the gift of the estate of one of Michigan’s greatest book collectors, the late Tracy W. McGregor. Robert R. McMath has had his eyes open for a copy of the first book by a Michigan man on the “substance of the sun”—a subject to which his Lake Angelus observatory is devoted.
The fearsome old gent with the
nose,
Whose portrait you see in this pose,
Rev-eds The Quarto,
In which you'll find more to
Enjoy than its free-wheeling prose.

The book is Augustus B. Wood­ward's Considerations on the Sub­stance of the Sun, Washington, 1801. He can rest his eyes now, for the Clements Library has just acquired a copy.

A.D. 1643

In the Clements Library is a copy of New England's First Fruits, London, 1643, a publication just reaching its 360th birthday. It is one of the first books to describe an institution of higher education in the British-American colonies (Harvard College). This famous tract has been characterized by the historian of Harvard as a "promotion pamphlet; one half expects to find in it a return post card, on receipt of which 'our representative will call.'" In describing the first Harvard building, the book mentions that it contains "a large library with some Bookes to it, the gifts of diverse of our friends." The Clements Library is also a "large library with some books in it" and we bespeak the interest of "divers of our friends," assuring them that our representative will call on the slightest provocation.

A.D. 1643

The first Bible ever printed in any European language in America appeared just 200 years ago. In the Clements Library's copy we read Biblia, das ist die heilige Schrift altes und neues Testaments. This is Martin Luther's translation, printed in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1743. The Library has both variants of this first edition, and also those published in 1753 and 1776. It also has the first Bible ever printed in English in America, that published in Philadelphia by Robert Aitken in 1781. But the first American Bible is the famous Eliot Indian Bible of which we have only the second edition of 1685. We still lack the first edition which appeared in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1665.

A.D. 1843

Just a century ago appeared John C. Frémont's Report of an Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains. A copy is to be found, naturally enough, in the "Documents Section" of the General Library. The volume is one of the landmark books in the subject of "The Plains and the Rockies," as the bibliog­rapher Henry R. Wagner has designated that field. Having said this, we think we will not return the volume to the "Documents Section" but put it in the "Rare Book Room." We have a notion that Michigan is far from strong in this all-important field of western Amer­ican. The worst of it is this—many of the rarer and more desirable items in western Americania actually appeared after the Univer­sity was founded, yet we did not get them at the time. Sometimes we are inclined to think we are stronger in the centuries of Amer­ican history before the foundation of the University than in the century that has elapsed since 1817.

Poetastery

Michigan has a somewhat dubious distinction as a home of queer poets. Our stellar item, of course, is the late Mrs. Julia Moore, "The sweet singer of Michigan," whose Sentimental Song Book first appeared in Grand Rapids in 1876.

On reading it one critic said "If Shakespeare were alive, he would be glad he was dead.” However, A. H. Greenly of Grand Rapids (and New York) has become our leading authority on the bibliog­raphy and textual criticism of this famous book. He says there are only three surviving copies of the genuine first edition, of which one is in the Rare Book Room of our General Library (There are forged and counterfeited reprints of the first edition). But there are others in this general field. For example, the late Mrs. Minnie Ward Patterson of Marshall wrote Pebbles From Old Pathways, Chicago, 1875. Elizabeth S. Adams of Pontiac is the authority on this lady, and has discovered a letter to Poet Patterson by William Cullen Bryant, to whom our lady sent her book. Said the author of "Thanatopsis" to our local bard " . . . as to making the writing of poetry your principal occupation, I cannot advise it . . . One should have some other employment upon which more certain reliance can be placed.” Then, too, we must not forget the "Cooley Poems," collected by Eugene Field in a Chicago book store, frequented by him, our great Thomas M. Cooley and others. They appear in Field's Culture's Garland, Being Memoranda on the Gradual Rise of Literature, Art, Music, and Society in Chicago and Other Western Ganglia, Chicago, 1888. The Michigan Historical Collections has a copy, but alas, it is not in original cloth—it has been rebound. Rather a grade above these is our Will Carleton, about whom there will be more in The Quarto later.

Other States Have Odd Poets, Too

Often we contend that the most significant thing about a book may have little or no relation whatever to its subject. In the Clements Li­brary there is a fine copy of the first book of verse ever printed in Con­necticut, Roger Wolcott's Poetical Meditations, Being the Improve­ment of Some Vacant Hours, New
A Book Collector's Income Tax

B. R. (Before Rum!

One of the greatest libraries of Americana ever formed was that of George Brinley, of Hartford. The Brinley sales extended over fifteen years (1879-93). The Clements Library acquired recently more than 2500 letters and papers of the Brinley family. Among them is a slip of paper, a receipt from the Collector of Internal Revenue to the collector of Americana for the payment of his income tax in the year 1869. Some of us may have an idea that the income tax dates only from 1913, when the Sixteenth Amendment was adopted. Not at all — there was an income tax of a flat ten percent during and after the Civil War. It was repealed in 1872. Then an income tax was provided in the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act of 1894, but the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional two years later. Eighteen years were required to work the idea into the Constitution via the Sixteenth Amendment.

EXHIBITIONS

General Library: Selections from the Pilcher and Crummer Medical Collections to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the publication of De Corporis Humani Fabrica, by Andreas Vesalius.

Clements Library: Autograph Letters of Presidents of the United States.

Michigan Historical Collections: The University in the First World War.

Do You Know Any Earlier Item?

We have long wanted to know the answer to this one: What is the first book in the literature of travel which mentions the University of Michigan and its first president? In the Clements Library is a copy of Estwick Evans, A Pedestrious Tour of Four Thousand Miles Through the Western States and Territories, Concord, N.H., 1819 (the gift of William R. Coe). On page 117 pedestrian Evans describes Detroit. Says he:

There is also an Academy in this place; and it is superintended by the learned Mr. Monteith. In time this city will become conspicuous for its literature, and for the propriety of its customs and manners.

The Adverse Uses of Publicity

The University is frequently criticized because, despite the richness of its resources and degree of its achievements, it gets comparatively little publicity. Consider the case of the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Declaration of Independence, as reported in TIME magazine, May 3, 1943. One George Dixon, reporter on the New York Daily News, got wind of the fact that Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress, was getting up an exhibition for the 200th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Jefferson. Mr. MacLeish wished to include, not only the original signed copy, but all the contemporary manuscript copies and drafts he could borrow.

The reporter on the tabloid then regaled two million readers with the following tale: that a copy of the great Declaration in Jefferson's own handwriting was owned by the Adams family of Massachusetts; that Mr. MacLeish asked whether he could borrow it, and its request was ignored; that Mr. MacLeish wrote a "follow-up" repeating his request and offering to send an armed guard to convoy the document to Washington, and that he was snubbed again; that Mr. MacLeish wrote a third time offering to insure the document for $100,000 if his request were granted — still no response. Then, buzzed Newsman Dixon, MacLeish received a penny postcard saying that the document was on its way and this was followed by the precious document itself, wrapped in ordinary brown paper and insured for $25. This, we opine, is "publicity," but we are not sure who was benefited thereby.

As TIME ran down the story, the following turned out to be the facts. The document is not in the handwriting of Jefferson, but of John Adams. It is owned by the Adams Manuscript Trust and is deposited in the Massachusetts Historical Society. Mr. MacLeish never had any correspondence with the Adams family on the subject. It
Hal H. Smith’s Book

On the Gathering of a Library has just been issued in Detroit, privately printed. Besides being a real contribution, it is a lot of fun. Mr. Smith makes clear that he uses the word “gathering” instead of “collecting” because the latter is not quite the right term for his job. The word “assembling” is altogether too formal, while “gathering implies a sort of joyous selection.” That joy is what Hal Smith has achieved in gathering his library and writing about it. All our friends should read his book.

Parkman’s Pontiac

If there is any such thing as a “classic” in Michigan history, it is Francis Parkman’s History of the Conspiracy of Pontiac. James Truslow Adams has called the book “a marvelous intellectual achievement.” Like most truly great works, one copy is insufficient for adequate investigation. As new data modified his concepts, Parkman changed the text in successive editions, and we naturally want all of them. The real hero of the story is not Pontiac, the man who lost the war, but Major Henry Gladwin, commander of Fort Detroit, the man who won. Parkman confessed that he could find but four of Gladwin’s letters relative to the siege of Detroit. When the late Regent Clements procured the papers of General Thomas Gage, commander-in-chief of the British Forces in North America, 1763-75, he found he had acquired for the University 51 letters of Gladwin, 17 of them written at Detroit—which Gladwin at first spelled “Detroit.” Howard Peckham, curator of manuscripts at the Clements Library, has been at work on a biography of Pontiac and incidentally, on a bibliography of the editions of the Conspiracy of Pontiac. He counts the University libraries as having the following as indicated:

1851, Boston. 1st edition, 1 vol. WLCL and GL.
1851, London. 1st English edition, 2 vols. WLCL.
1855, Boston. 2nd edition, 1 vol. WLCL and GL.
1863, Boston. 3rd edition, 1 vol. WLCL.
1866, Boston. Special edition limited to 75 copies, 1 vol. WLCL has No. 1 copy.
1868, Boston. 4th edition, 1 vol. GL.
1869, Boston. 5th edition.
1870, Boston. 6th edition, revised, with additions, 2 vols. WLCL.
1874, Boston. 7th edition, revised, with additions, 2 vols.

This list does not include the later reprints, either done separately or in sets of Parkman’s complete works. And don’t ask us why Little, Brown and Co. went on issuing the 9th edition after the 10th had appeared. We asked the president of Little, Brown, and he doesn’t know either.

In Print


For Sale

The Detroit Gazette, founded in 1817, was the first Michigan newspaper. In volume one, number one, at the top of the first column on page one is the first advertisement ever to appear in a Michigan newspaper. It is headed “BOOKS.” Messers Sheldon & Reed, “in Atwater Street—a few rods above the Public Wharf” offer Porter’s Scottish Chiefs, Johnson’s Dictionary, Goldsmith’s Vicar of Wakefield, Scott’s Lady of the Lake, Works of Lord Byron, Cervantes Don Quixote, and Morse’s Universal Geography and Atlas. W. A. P. John, of Detroit, ought to give us a note on these early Michigan advertisements of books.