150 for West Point

The military academy established at West Point in 1802 has grown from a cluster of ratty buildings around a mudhole to one of the show spots of the United States. The Clements Library in celebration of the sesquicentennial of the founding of the United States Military Academy opened an exhibition of West Point materials on the first of January. We chose for our subject "West Point during the American Revolutionary War."

The first series of exhibition cases contains five original manuscript maps from the papers of the British commander in chief, Sir Henry Clinton. The maps portray the Hudson River Valley with special emphasis on the British and American forts at West Point, and the famous chains across the river to prevent shipping. One map appears to have been made by a British spy, for it shows the interior of the fort, positions of cannon, breastworks, etc. The maps, setting the scene for the exhibition, are followed by selected manuals of instruction available in America before and during the Revolutionary War. Among them are Frederick the Great's Military Instructions, represented by a copy given to Nathanael Greene by Winthrop Sargent; Wolfe's very popular Instructions to Young Officers; Sir Guy Johnson's Manual Exercises, prepared for the New York militia; and one of the standard British examples, Edward Harvey's The Manual Exercise. The two versions of Rules and Articles for the Better Government of the Troops issued by the Continental Congress are present in three editions. Military guides for all branches of the army are shown in works by Roger Stevenson, Thomas Simes, the Earl of Cavan, Campbell Dalrymple, the Chevalier de Clairac, Lewis Nicola, Timothy Pickering, and others. All are American editions, published to satisfy the needs of the militarily unprepared rebels.

Five editions of the seventeen on the Library's shelves comprise the section devoted to Baron von Steuben's famous Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. The Baron's efforts to achieve uniformity in training troops were rewarded by the acceptance of his Regulations as standard for the United States Army. The work was kept in print for many years after the War was over. Several of the engraved plates illustrating manoeuvres are displayed.

The last section of the exhibition comprises selections from the absorbing series of letters between Benedict Arnold and John André. No more dramatic episode than the attempt of Benedict Arnold to betray West Point into the hands of the British has ever occurred at the Fort. The letters exhibited, most of them in code, include the notorious offer of Arnold to surrender West Point for £20,000 and a few other considerations, Arnold's note detailing the movements of Washington, and John André's beautiful farewell letter to his superior, Sir Henry Clinton. The first editions of the trial of André and the court martial of Arnold are also displayed, and the exhibition is concluded with two manuscripts by Sir Henry Clinton. The last item is his report of the Arnold-André fiasco to Lord George Germain; the next to last manuscript is his retained copy of the letter to his sisters in which he writes, "The horrid deed is done. Washington) has committed premeditated murder."

Benefactor of the Deaf and Dumb

If the Russians keep on digging up obscure inventors who are alleged to have originated almost everything known to mankind, America should turn to her own past for a view of the almost forgotten men of her early science.

And among these is William Thornton, whose Cadmus, Philadelphia, 1791, has been presented to the Library by The Clements Library Associates, Cadmus, according to another great American scientist, Alexander Graham Bell, is "the first work upon the education of the deaf actually written and published in America." He adds that "its suggestions certainly have not received that attention from practical teachers of the deaf that their importance deserves."

Thornton, whose book was printed by his fellow Philadelphian, Robert Aitken, was described by his contemporaries as a man whose "company was a complete antidote for dullness." He was a painter, a soldier, and, with John Fitch, his close friend, the inventor of the steamboat.

Committee of Management

The Regents of the University have appointed Renville Wheat, of Detroit, a member-at-large of the Committee of Management of the Clements Library. Mr Wheat, a member of the Executive Committee of The Associates from its founding and currently chairman of the Committee, is a nephew of the late Mr Clements. He is a graduate of the University and of its Law School. The Library welcomes Mr Wheat to the Committee, for he has shown warm interest in the Library's affairs for many years.
Pliny’s Ape

A recent news article informed readers that the often described “hoop snake” does not exist in fact. Yet the same newspaper reported hopefully that a “sea monster” had been sighted in a small lake near Ann Arbor, and carried an Associated Press dispatch about “flying saucers.” The era of fabulous and fantastic creatures is still at hand. Perhaps what we need is a reincarnation of Caius Julius Solinus to set us straight about the current wonders of the world. If we could believe in the wicked cockatrice, the odious sphinx, and sardonic plants, we might recover some of the world’s former innocence.

The marvels we intend to describe here are, in spite of the preceding paragraph, true and believable. One of the books (and it may be the oldest book in the Library) given by Mr. Clements, is a manuscript copy of Collectanea rerum memorabilium by Caius Julius Solinus written in Tuscany about the middle of the fifteenth century. Calligraphically, it is a handsome specimen of the humanistic script with charming large initials set against backgrounds of interlaced vines and leaves.

Solinus was the chief fabulist of the Christian era. We are indebted to him for a collection of marvels such as only human beings could believe. Writing in the third or fourth Christian century, Solinus may have been a grammarian, but not a geographer, although his Collectanea is arranged geographically, i.e., the wondrous and wonderful inhabitants of the Antipodes are grouped together in the description of that part of the world, etc. He was interested in the strange and fabulous, not the true and prosaic. He combed the writings of Pliny, Pomponius Mela, Varro, and others, liberally quoting Virgil, Homer, Cicero, Sallust, and Aristotle as “proofs,” for his selections of impossible truths. He seems to have tried deliberately to avoid the provable and accept only hearsay. Nevertheless, he was quoted freely by St. Augustine, the Venerable Bede, Isidore of Seville, and other Christian writers.

We are interested in the writings of Solinus, fabulous though they are, because they contain records of what the Renaissance world “knew” just before the New World was reached by south Europeans. Columbus was familiar with the writings of Solinus, including the hysteric references to islands west of Spain and the inference that King Juba claimed the sea was open from Spain to the Indies. Columbus’ theories were not derived from Solinus, however. But Columbus did use Solinus and other fabulists and cosmographers to support his own theories. The Columbus “Letter” contains an amusing oblique reply to Solinus and his followers. “And so I did not see any monsters,” wrote Columbus, “nor do I have any knowledge of them anywhere with the exception of a certain island called Charis . . . which a tribe inhabits that is held by its neighbors to be extremely savage. These feed on human flesh.”

In addition to the fifteenth century manuscript of Solinus, the Library has also long owned an incunable edition printed at Parma in 1480, and editions published in 1503, 1518, 1520 (including the famous Apianus map), 1538, 1543, 1554, 1557, 1576, and 1587. Still, we lacked the first edition of 1473. We need mourn the lacuna no longer, however, for the Library has at last acquired a copy of the Venice, 1473, edition printed by Nicolas Jenson. And it is a beautiful, clean, crisp copy. The first page of text carries a delicate manuscript border on two sides in colors and a fine Renaissance initial.

Nicholas Jenson is one of our favorite printers. He was a Frenchman from Sommevoire, Haute-Marne, who is said to have been sent by Charles VII of France, whose mint master at Tours he had been, to Mainz in 1458 to learn the art of printing. Jenson never returned to France, as far as we know, but popped up in Venice in 1468. He needs no romantic legends to increase his stature, for he was a great printer and cutter of types. His influence is apparent even today in such type faces as those of Emery Walker for the Doves Press and the “Centaur” type face of Bruce Rogers. Jenson’s types are noted for their richness, the high state of development of their forms, and their uncommon readability. Taken letter by letter, the types are far from mechanically perfect, but if they were perfect the effect of a page set in them would lose much of its mellow quality and would, indeed, be less easily read. Some other Italian types of the period may approach Jenson’s in beauty of form, but Jenson’s composition of a page and its imposition on paper have rarely been rivalled. The pages of our newly acquired Solinus (our first book printed by Jenson) illustrate these points splendidly.

Donors

Accompanying this issue of The Quarto is a copy of the Library’s Annual Report to the President of the University for 1950-51. In the interest of economy (trite but true), donor’s names were omitted this year. We do not want anyone to think we are not grateful for the many fine gifts we received during 1950-51; we are deeply appreciative. In addition to The Associates we extend warm thanks to the following friends who increased the Library’s resources:

Hundley B. Baker
Dr. Norman E. Clarke
Mrs. Rhela Cope
Herman Crofoot
Charles M. Davis
Mrs. Fulkerson
C. A. Gerken
Harry S. Hawkins
G. H. Hebb
Frank Monaghan
Oberlin College Library
Kenneth M. Stevens
Solange Strong
Harry Sullivan
"A Harmonious Human Multitude"

A political scientist of our acquaintance remarked recently that politicians in the United States are "distinguished, disturbed, or distrusted." The scoundrels and the madmen are understandably more fascinating than the dully good, since they are livelier and more various. Then comes what the late Carl Van Doren called "a harmonious human multitude"—Benjamin Franklin. Certainly he was distinguished in every sense of the word and simultaneously, livelier and more various than any of his brilliant contemporaries.

The Clements Library collection of Frankliniana is sizable, although it cannot approach the richness of the Philadelphia libraries. We have been trying for years to show as well rounded a view of Franklin as we can, yet there are always more facets to be considered than there are books on our Franklin shelves. Two recent acquisitions have helped to round out the portrait.

One of the early concerns of the English colonists in the New World, after they had thoroughly settled themselves, was the establishment of schools and colleges for the education of their children. Harvard College was founded in 1636, and other schools quickly followed. There never seemed to be enough of them—or, at least, they never seemed to be in the right places, or conducted in the proper manner. Franklin, a thinking man of more ideas than he could handle readily, first drew up a plan for a Pennsylvania school or academy in 1743, but set it aside for later use. Somewhat earlier (1740) a group of education-minded citizens, including Franklin, had set up a charity school in Philadelphia. In 1743 and later, in 1749, when Franklin took the matter up again, something more than the earlier school was wanted. Franklin's first step "was to associate in the design a number of active friends... the next was to write and publish a pamphlet entitled "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania." This I distributed among the principal inhabitants gratis; and as soon as I could suppose their minds a little prepared by the perusal of it, I set on foot a subscription for opening and supporting an Academy..." The academy was soon established, joined to the charity school, and eventually allowed to become the University of Pennsylvania.

Copies of the Proposals were so thoroughly "distributed" by Franklin that when a census of extant copies was taken in 1931 only seventeen were located. The census contains an odd error; the Clements Library was credited with owning a copy. Until late in 1951, the Library did not own a copy; the deficiency is now supplied and the census (as far as this Library is concerned) is now correct. Such an error on the part of the census-taker is understandable, for in 1927, the Library issued a reprint of the Proposals in a handsome edition designed by the great American typographer, Bruce Rogers.

The second Franklin book acquired recently is Franklin's report on another public enterprise of general concern. Franklin did not propose the establishment of the Pennsylvania Hospital (although nearly every other institution in Philadelphia seems to have stemmed from his fertile mind). The Hospital was suggested in 1750 by Dr. Thomas Bond, a friend of Franklin and one of the earliest members of the American Philosophical Society.

But, reported Franklin, Bond had little success. "At length he came to me with the compliment that he found there was no such thing as carrying a public spirited project through without my being concerned in it. For,' says he, 'I am asked by those to whom I propose subscribing: Have you consulted Franklin about this business? And what does he think of it? And when I tell them that I have not (supposing it rather out of your line), they do not subscribe, but say they will consider of it.'" Franklin enquired into the matter, lent his support to the project, and joined the first board of managers, when the hospital was established.

Four years later, Franklin submitted the manuscript of his Some Account of the Pennsylvania Hospital to the board of managers; they ordered the firm of Franklin & Hall to print it at once. It is this rare pamphlet about the founding and early years of the Pennsylvania Hospital that has come to the Library through the generosity of The Clements Library Associates. We like the opening passage of the Account well enough to quote part of it herewith. The world hardly seems to have changed two hundred years' worth, does it?

"About the end of the year 1736 some persons who had frequent opportunities of observing the distress of such distempered poor as from time to time came to Philadelphia for the advice and assistance of the physicians and surgeons of that city; how difficult it was for them to procure suitable lodgings and other conveniences proper for their respective cases and how expensive the providing good and careful nurses and other attendants for want whereof many must suffer greatly... and considering moreover that even the poor inhabitants of this city though they had homes were therein but badly accommodated in sickness and could not be so well and so easily taken care of in their separate habitations as they might be in one convenient house, under one inspection and in the hands of skilful practitioners; and several of the inhabitants of the province who unhappily became disordered in their senses wandered about to the terror of their neighbors, there being no place (except the house of correction) in which they might be confined and subjected to proper management for their recovery, and that house was by no means fitted for such purposes; did charitably consult together and confer with their friends and acquaintances on the best means of relieving the distressed under those circumstances."
John Watling

As a member of the Committee of Management of the Library and as Chairman of the Executive Committee of The Clements Library Associates, John W. Watling, of Bloomfield Hills, was a wonderful friend. His death in December of last year robbed the Library of one of its most loyal supporters. He knew and understood the Library, for he was a collector of rare books, a businessman, and a civic leader. He listened patiently to anyone who talked to him. His advice was always kindly and wise. He was a friend to all who knew him.

The Executive Committee, speaking for The Clements Library Associates, adopted unanimously the following resolution at its last meeting:

WHEREAS the Executive Committee of The Clements Library Associates has enjoyed the friendship and continued support of John Wright Watling from the moment of its founding, and appreciates the time and energy expended by Mr. Watling in forwarding the aims of The Associates as Chairman of its Executive Committee, be it therefore

RESOLVED that the Executive Committee extends to his family its deepest sympathy at the loss of a friend whose place in their affections cannot be filled.

Five Centuries in Five Minutes

In explaining the Library to our visitors, we are sometimes fortunate enough to find our caller has one hour, often he has only ten minutes. Let us say you have five minutes. May we “explain” two books which illustrate the scope of our collection? It is the intention of the Library to acquire and conserve what is “important, desirable, and hard to get” in the field of Americana—“the documentary evidences of American history on the basis of rarity, priority, and importance.”

In our Rare Book Room, we can show you the Columbus “Letter” published in Rome in 1493. It is a “documentary evidence” because it was the report of the Discoverer himself. It was printed in 1498 because Columbus did not return until the year after his discovery. It could not be printed in America, because there were no printing presses in America in the fifteenth century. It is a “rarity” because barely a score of copies of that edition survive in the whole world. It is a “priority” because it reports the first voyage by Europeans in a sailing vessel which led to the colonization of the New World. Its “importance” hardly needs comment.

Recollecting that you have only five minutes, we conclude with another slim volume. It is entitled The Missourian. This little pamphlet is datelined “Tokyo Bay, September 10, 1945.” Here is the report of what took place on a certain memorable day, written by the men on board the USS Missouri at the time, and printed on the ship’s own printing press. As to its “rarity,” we have the testimony of Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, who visited our Library, remarked the little booklet, said he did not have one himself, and put his autograph on our Missourian with the same pen with which he had signed the surrender terms themselves. Its “priority” is self-evident. As to its “importance” as a document in human history: we suspect most readers of The Quarto hung over their radios the day General MacArthur’s words came from the Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Postscript

How did we come by these rarities? Each of them was a gift to the Library. The Columbus “Letter” was given by Mr. Clements, when the Library first came to the University. The Missourian reached us as a gift from a young man who had spent pleasant hours in the Library as an Ann Arbor schoolboy. He remembered what he had heard about the criteria of selection which we use and when, as printer on board the USS Missouri, this little rarity passed through his hands, Ann Arbor’s Mr. Gainsley sensed the future importance of the document and sent copies here for permanent safety.

The Adams Memorial Lecture

In a letter dated April 2, 1951, the Executive Committee of The Clements Library Associates invited The Associates to contribute to a fund in memory of the late Dr. Randolph G. Adams, The Associates and other friends of the Library responded most generously.

The Executive Committee was charged with responsibility for selecting the form of the Memorial. Several proposals were considered, including those submitted by donors to the fund. The Committee decided that the Memorial shall be in the form of an annual lectureship. No restrictions on subject or speaker were defined by the Committee, although the members assumed that the lectures would be concerned with rare books and American History, or both, and delivered by rare bookmen and historians.

The Executive Committee of The Clements Library Associates takes pleasure in announcing that the first annual Randolph G. Adams Memorial Lecture will be given by Dr. Luther H. Evans, Librarian of Congress. The lecture will be delivered in Ann Arbor on the evening of October 8, 1952. Dr. Evans is a lifelong friend of Dr. Adams and of the Clements Library. In his position as Librarian of Congress, he sees most clearly the importance of books in today’s world. As a member of the United States Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Evans has served as a delegate to several international meetings. He has recently completed a round-the-world flight during which he acted as advisor on library matters in Iran, India, Pakistan, and the Philippine Islands.