

author, and he describes this in his characteristically modest manner. Jefferson expected the library to be the heart and life blood of the University. Under Mr. Clemon's guiding genius and with the help of his "Board of Alderman," as he called his key assistants, the Alderman Library has come close to achieving the stature which the founder's vision and personal efforts had established for it a century and a quarter before.

Library history has been neglected in the literature of scholarship. Academic libraries in particular have lacked chroniclers. The Old Dominion's University Library has had a particularly interesting history, and its publication is highly appropriate. No one else could have told the story as well as Harry Clemons, the tenth librarian of the University. His appointment at Virginia followed a term as librarian and professor of English at Nanking University in China, from which he was driven during the "Nanking Incident." The Chinese bandits forced him to decide between librarianship and a professorship of English, he says, by destroying his lecture notes. His story is told in the dignified prose of a man of letters, in a style

all too rarely found in library literature. The volume is unencumbered by footnotes, but a single note at the end informs the reader that a fully documented manuscript of the books has been deposited in the Alderman Library and is available for examination.

Dumas Malone has contributed an admirable foreword in which he pays high and well-deserved tribute to the author and to the Alderman Library. If Jefferson could return, Mr. Malone says, "He would find the Alderman Library, as thousands of students and hundreds of scholars have found it, a free and happy place. . . . There is more sunlight . . . more warmth and courtesy and sheer human kindness, than is commonly encountered. Many have contributed to this spirit, of course, but the person most responsible for it is Harry Clemons, who with unerring instinct seized upon the best traditions of Virginia and of Jefferson and reincarnated them in an institution."

This volume which becomes an important milestone in the writing of library history contains much of the spirit and warmth to which Mr. Malone refers.—*Benjamin E. Powell, Duke University Libraries.*

## The Graphic Image—Some Books about Drawings and Prints: the Anglo-American Tradition II

*English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries.* By Francis Wormald. New York, Praeger, 1953. 83p. \$6.00.

*Engraving in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries; A Descriptive Catalogue with Introductions.* Part I. The Tudor Period. By Arthur M. Hind. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1952. \$22.50.

*William Blake's Illuminated Books.* A Census compiled by Geoffrey Keynes and Edwin Wolf 2nd. New York, The Grolier Club, 1953. 124p. \$10.00.

The three books to be reviewed here deal with drawings, prints and book illustrations in England. I had hoped to include them in my last review column in the October, 1954, issue, which was devoted to the Anglo-American tradition in bookmaking. However, so many books had to be included in that column that it became necessary to hold some over for another occasion. This is

one of the reasons why they were not reviewed earlier (the other one being the pressure of other obligations).

One of the most interesting and most puzzling aspects of England's participation in the graphic arts of the Western world is the sporadic nature of her contribution. When seen in the broad perspective of a 1000-year history, there is a curious pattern of high creativity abruptly followed by almost total sterility and vice versa.

"It is well known that the condition of English art from about the middle of the ninth to the middle of the tenth centuries was bad," states Francis Wormald in his *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*. This book, by the professor of paleography at the University of London, and formerly assistant keeper in the British Museum's Department of Manuscripts, records the first significant revival of the graphic arts in the British Isles after the stupendous

earlier achievements of the Irish monastic artists and their followers.

Professor Wormald shows us how the impetus of the Benedictine revival of monasticism in England opened the way for an important new school of Anglo-Saxon book illumination. He sees more clearly, perhaps, than many other historians that the many beautiful and sensitive drawings in these manuscripts were not merely unfinished studies for illuminations, but independent works of graphic art. They have their own style and flavor and a special intensity. The influence of the famous Utrecht Psalter, the ninth century masterpiece of Carolingian illustration, is justly emphasized as the starting point for significant growth. The subsequent emergence of an independent art of drawing is traced in a considerable number of manuscripts which can safely be identified not only with Winchester, but also with other monasteries.

One important aspect of this early English graphic art stands in need of more profound interpretation, but not necessarily at the hands of the paleographer or the art historian. These illustrations are the result of a very particular spirituality and religious devotion. The term "revival of monasticism" does not explain sufficiently the rise of these magnificent graphic visions. We have to turn to the writings of one of the great modern interpreters of medieval religious life for a key that will open the door to a fuller understanding of these manifestations:

The fathers of the Church and the contemplative saints, aware that their deepest experience of God was always somehow associated with the Liturgy and intimately dependent on the Psalms, have sometimes proceeded to argue, *a posteriori*, that the true meaning of the Psalms was a hidden and allegorical meaning. This is what has sometimes been called the 'mystical' sense of Scripture. The literal sense, with its battles, its triumphs, its agonies and its moralizing, is only an outer shell. The 'real' meaning of the Psalms is held to be a spiritual kernel which must be arrived at by penetration of the 'letter.' To cling to the literal meaning alone is, according to this line of thought, to miss the whole significance of the Psalms, for 'the letter killeth.' (Thomas Merton, *Bread in the Wilderness*, New York, New Directions, 1953.)

English book art more than held its own

through most of the Middle Ages. However, towards the end of that period, during part of the fourteenth and virtually all of the fifteenth century, we see again the flagging of artistic creativity. Thus it happened that at the beginning of printing England's contribution was insignificant. This condition is recognized in Arthur Hind's basic reference work on *Engraving in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*:

While a host of craftsmen, in Germany and the surrounding countries, were engraving plates for printing in the fifteenth century, nothing was produced in England. The beginning of the craft of line-engraving in Northern Europe dated from the first half of the fifteenth century. . . . From the craft of the goldsmith, and engraved designs on metal, it was only a short step to the use of metal plates, similarly engraved, for printing on paper. It is the more surprising therefore that this step was only taken in England after the passing of the great generation of line-engravers on the continent of Europe. . . .

The gradual reawakening of native enterprise in English graphic arts, the growth from tentative beginnings to indigenous strength, is the basic story told in the first volume of this important work by the sometime Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. Organized as a comprehensive catalog, it records all prints "made from engraved or etched plates of copper, or other metal," including "work by foreigners in England as well as by native craftsmen, and also occasional work done abroad closely related to England."

A general introduction of 38 pages, explaining the general principles of the work and providing the reader with a continuous narrative, is followed by the catalog. This is the main body of the work, comprising over 250 pages, and arranged as a series of biographical articles in chronological order. Then follows additional information in the form of notes, a bibliography, etc. An impressive series of 156 plates, many of them showing several subjects, conclude the volume.

An extraordinarily vivid picture of English life in all its aspects emerges from these reproductions. They bring together a body of pictorial information not previously assembled and known only in isolated examples

to most students of graphic arts and English history.

In the eighteenth century Britain's contribution to the graphic arts of the Western World is at least on a par with that of the European continent. During the dawn of the mechanical era and at the height of industrialization in the mid-nineteenth century Britain was the leader. Its importance is paramount in the revolution against the evils of mechanization.

There is one artist whose work and life can be looked upon as symbols of man's fate in the industrial revolution. William Blake, the prophet who used the imagery of words and pictures in a combination of unique effectiveness, made a significant contribution to the multiplication of the printed image, which helped pave the way for mass production of picture printing. But he also fought passionately for the freedom of man's individual soul. His desperate struggle against an indifferent and often hostile world did not end with his death. The verdict of "naive dilettantism" long stood in the way of a fuller appreciation of his genius.

Now, it seems, he is recognized more generally and perhaps more generously, than ever before. No less than three important books about William Blake have appeared within the last two years. To a large extent they are the results of the combined efforts of scholars and bibliographers on both sides of the Atlantic. There is Joseph H. Wicksteed's *Jerusalem: A Commentary* (London, Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust,

1954); Albert S. Roe's *Blake's Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1953); and the census of *William Blake's Illuminated Books*, by Geoffrey Keynes and Edwin Wolf, 2nd.

This book is actually a revised and much enlarged edition of a section in the Grolier Club's *Bibliography of Blake*, printed in 1921. In the 32 years since its publication more than 40 hitherto unrecorded copies of illuminated books have come to light; these are listed here and the previous descriptions carefully gone over. There are eight plates of reproductions.

The bibliography, which forms the main body of the work, is arranged in chronological order. Under each title we find a brief "description," a detailed analysis of "contents," listing and describing each plate in its various states, a most interesting "note," and a listing of existing copies, followed by references to "facsimile reproductions." The "preface," revised and expanded from the 1921 edition, contains a careful description of William Blake's graphic technique, pointing out his possible sources and explaining his processes.

One of the most important things about this census is that, along with the very complete and up-to-date bibliographical apparatus, it contains in the notes to each title a brief but penetrating commentary on William Blake's literary and artistic intentions and the significance of each book within the lifework of the artist.—*Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, New York, N.Y.*

## New Mexico's Undergraduate Library

(Continued from page 156)

(Half-cards filed in the main catalog should prevent this in part.)

(2) Greater possibilities for loss and for "missing" category books through misshelving by student users. (Checking all items leaving the room, plus constant shelf-reading and attention to shelving practices eliminates much of this. Students are asked not to reshelve books themselves.)

(3) Possible confusion caused by subject arrangement as opposed to the more common decimal classification. Many items might logically be placed in more than one section, adding to the confusion. Thus

consultation by card catalog is still sometimes necessary even though it is an open-shelf collection.

(4) Occasionally when discharging books received at the Circulation Desk student assistants have discharged the locator card as a charge and have returned the "UG" book to the stacks, causing a "book missing" report.

(5) Duplication of processing. Five more cards must be typed and books slipped again, for items which have been already slipped and cataloged upon initial arrival in the library.