

THE LIBRARIES OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

BY A. S. W. ROSENBACH

THE degree of greatness of each of the Presidents of the United States can be determined by his interest in literature and in books. What the Presidents read and the contents of their Libraries make an interesting study.¹ Most of the great names in American history were true lovers of books and liked to have them always at their side. Benjamin Franklin was a great collector and purchased rare books as early as 1732 for the Library Company of Philadelphia. Other great men who never reached the Presidency were also collectors, but we cannot dwell upon them but must confine ourselves in this paper to the bookish activities of the Presidents themselves.

The first President of the United States was a true collector. Washington was born in Virginia and had, when a youth, as his near neighbor, William Byrd of Westover, the first man in the American colonies who formed a great library. There were many fine collections in the great estates that were within a day's ride of Mount Vernon. In fact, this section of the country was the centre of the culture of the time. While the New England Provinces had scholars of no mean ability, and collectors to boot, the main interest was in theology and dialectics, the austere Mather influence prevailing. The broader European culture was current in Virginia and the College of William and Mary had a

¹I am indebted to my dear friend, Dr. Clarence S. Brigham, Director of the Society, for much of the material relating to Presidential bookplates and the present location of Presidential libraries. His enthusiasm for the subject of this paper was contagious and his collaboration has made the writing of it a real pleasure.

liberalizing influence throughout the Colony. Washington came under this influence early. He was a man of considerable means and delighted in his library, owning the best editions of his favorite authors.

Washington had his own binder in Philadelphia and many of the volumes from his library were bound in calf, tooled on the back with emblematical designs. Addison and Goldsmith were the authors he liked best, although he delved into Shakespeare, Swift, Smollett, Sterne, and Fielding. As with many another great man, Cervantes was a prime favorite and he enjoyed reading "Don Quixote." In fact, he had two copies of Dr. Smollett's translation of "Don Quixote" published in London in four volumes in 1786. For one of the copies we know that on September 17, 1787, Washington paid twenty-two shillings and sixpence.

Washington was naturally interested in the classics of the eighteenth century and possessed copies of "Chesterfield's Letters," "The Adventures of Telemachus," Fielding's "Tom Jones," "Pope's Works," in six volumes, Smollett's "Humphrey Clinker," "The Beauties of Sterne," "Voltaire's Letters," "Gulliver's Travels" and Gibbons' "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." He also possessed a copy of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary in two large volumes published in London in 1786. It was appraised in 1800 for \$10.

The President's wife was also interested in books. We find that Mrs. Washington had among her treasures "The Jilts, or Female Fortune Hunters," which bears upon the title-page the following autograph:

"Mrs. Martha Washington Her Book 1774."

This was purchased, however, twenty-two years after she had plighted her troth to George and, therefore, the subject matter of the books was of little use to her.

Washington delighted in buying books about his native state and among the prized volumes in the Boston Athenaeum is Washington's copy of Beverley's "History of Virginia, 1722," with his signature and date, 1769, written boldly upon the title page.

A great many of Washington's books were sold in Philadelphia in 1876 by M. Thomas & Sons, Auctioneers. Among them was one labelled, "Virginia Journal" and consisted of many pamphlets relating to Virginia and printed in Williamsburg, the state Capital. It had been bound for Washington and bore his name with a mighty flourish upon the title page. My uncle, Moses Polock, was present at the sale and bought this volume for the huge sum of \$22, one of the highest prices at the sale.

Washington, as is well-known, was interested in agriculture. He was the first farmer of his day. He corresponded with Arthur Young, James Anderson and other famous agriculturists of England. The book from which Washington laid out the gardens at Mount Vernon recently came into my possession. It is entitled "New Principles of Gardening" by Batty Langley, London, 1728. It bears on the title page the signature of George Washington, 1761, Cost Sterling 15 shillings. When the inventory of the library of Washington was made after his death this volume was appraised at the magnificent sum of two dollars. It is a quarto volume, beautifully illustrated with copper plates, with plans and layouts of formal gardens. We can imagine Washington, with painstaking care, reading these new principles and putting them into practical execution in the gardens of his lovely home along the slopes of the Potomac.

Washington, like all book collectors, and to the despair of booksellers, was anxious to make advantageous purchases, and enjoyed buying them at appraised, rather than market prices. When the Custis Estate was being settled he wrote, "I had no particular reason for keeping, and handing down to his son, the books of the late Col. Custis, saving that I thought it would be taking the advantage of a low appraisement to make them my own property." We would all like to buy the books of George Washington at their appraised value in 1800! Washington states in his

diary that he visited the shop of John Bradford in Philadelphia and purchased books and pamphlets relating to the controversy between Great Britain and the Colonies.

Washington was naturally interested in works on military science of which he had many. There were numerous volumes on the art of war, on the Prussian Evolutions, on military discipline, on fortifications and on appointments to the army. He read these faithfully and occasionally there is a pointed note on the margins.

Washington, apart from being a book collector, was also a collector of choice wines and liquors. As a hospitable host he liked to secure the rarest and finest vintages. Nothing delighted him more than to place before his guests some exquisite old liquor, which had arrived by packet from France. Knowing his taste for such things, I was very anxious to secure a volume entitled "Cordial for Low Spirits" which I knew he at the time possessed. I remember seeing Washington's copy offered in a bookseller's catalogue in Boston and I immediately telegraphed for it. When the volume arrived, instead of finding in it recipes for enlivening old cordials, such as chartreuse and benedictine, you may imagine my disappointment in discovering that it consisted entirely of religious and moral precepts, not at all calculated to raise low spirits.

Washington not only kept his volumes in the study at Mount Vernon, but many were placed in a beautiful bookcase in the dining-room. The family and heirs of the First President gradually dispersed the volumes and now they are scattered far and wide. The largest collection of them is in the Boston Athenaeum, which in 1848 purchased 455 volumes and about 750 pamphlets. The price paid was \$3800, which even in those days was considered a bargain.

The inventory of Washington's library made at the time of his death listed 884 volumes, exclusive of pamphlets and maps. The original inventory is miss-

ing from the records at Fairfax Court House, but is known from a copy sent by John A. Washington to Edward Everett, and is published in Everett's "Life of Washington," 1860. (Also printed with additional details in the Boston Athenaeum Catalogue of the Washington Collection.)

Washington's library under his Will went to his favorite nephew, Judge Bushrod Washington, who added to it many volumes of his own, about doubling the size of the collection. Upon his death in 1826, he left 468 miscellaneous volumes to his nephew, John A. Washington, and 658 miscellaneous volumes, 1125 miscellaneous pamphlets, besides 169 volumes of State Papers, 22 volumes of Journals of Congress and 649 volumes of law books, to his nephew, George C. Washington. The last three lots were destined for Bushrod Washington Herbert, the son of a niece, in case he should be trained for the law.

The books left to George C. Washington, or what remained of them, were sold about 1847 to Henry Stevens of London and in the following year were purchased through the raising of a subscription of about \$4000, for the Boston Athenaeum. Of the books so purchased, 354 volumes and about 450 pamphlets came from the original George Washington library, and 80 volumes and about 300 pamphlets belonged to Bushrod Washington or other members of the family. Speaking of the books from Washington's Library, the Report of the Library for 1849 quaintly remarks, "They would be regarded even in Europe as curiosities of great interest and value, and would command prices which might seem incredible to one unacquainted with sums given for objects associated with the memory of highly distinguished men."

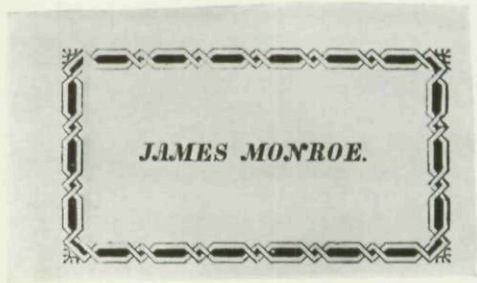
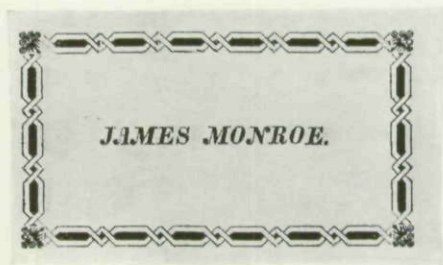
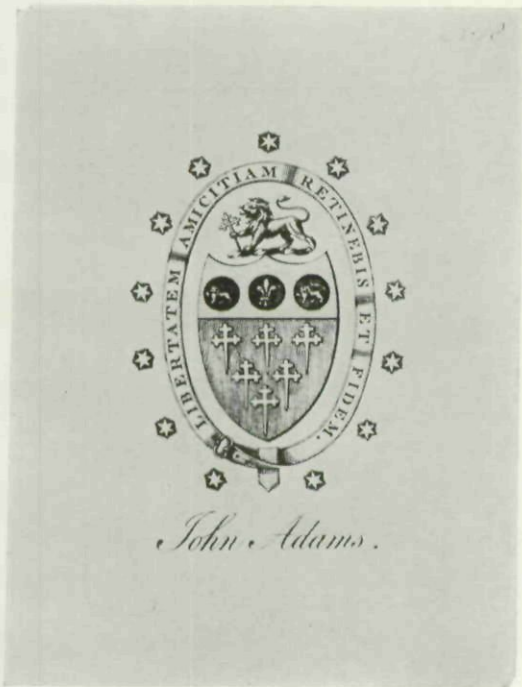
The books which Bushrod Washington left to his nephew, John A. Washington, finally passed to the latter's grandson, Lawrence Washington of Alexandria, and gradually came upon the market between 1876 and 1892. The largest lot, containing 138 titles, was sold

by Mr. Thomas & Sons at Philadelphia in 1876, the price being very low, less than \$2000 for the whole collection. From 1890 to 1892 Stan. V. Henkels held several sales which included many books from Washington's library and where high prices for the first time were realized. Since that time scarcely a year has passed but a volume or two from Washington's library has come up at public auction, the prices steadily increasing until within recent years any authentic book with his autograph or bookplate has brought at least two thousand dollars, and many have brought much more.

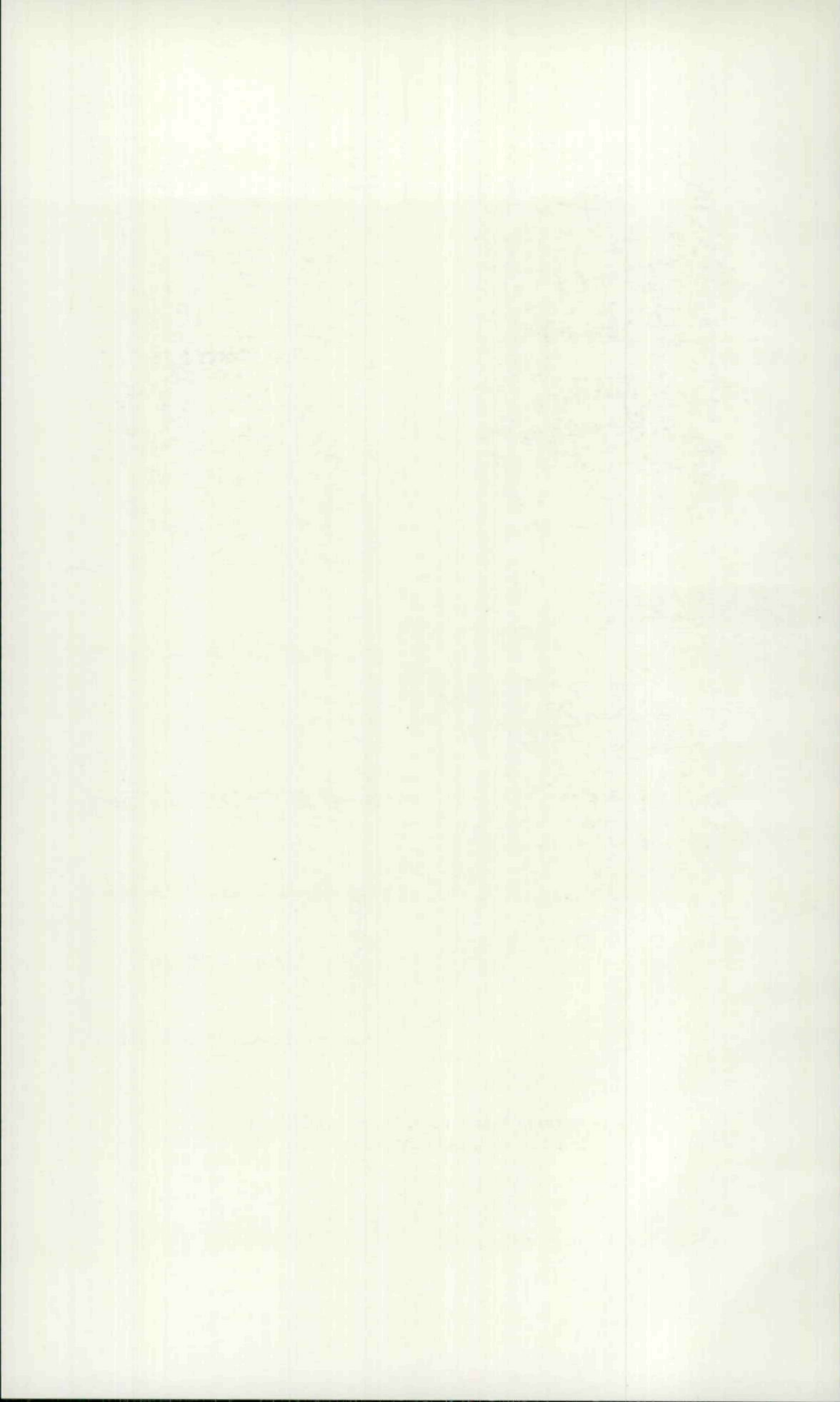
The best account of his library is contained in the Boston Athenaeum's splendid "Catalogue of the Washington Collection," compiled by A. P. C. Griffin and W. C. Lane in 1897. A few items of additional interest can be found in Rev. Eliphalet N. Potter's "Washington a Model in his Library and Life," 1895.

Washington's bookplate appears in many, but not all, of the genuine volumes from his library. In the Boston Athenaeum list, 137 volumes out of 884 contain the book-plate. When he obtained it, or how he used it, or when he discontinued its use, cannot be told from a study of the volumes in which it was inserted. Nor is there any clue to the engraver. Richard C. Lichtenstein thought that it was made between 1777 and 1781 and because of the incorrectness of its heraldry by an American engraver. Charles Dexter Allen thought that from its appearance it was engraved in England about 1770. An examination of Washington's carefully kept accounts does not reveal any entry for expense of a bookplate.

The original copper-plate was owned in the family as late as 1861, and from it many restrikes were made at different times, distinguishable from the original in the quality of the paper. In the American Antiquarian Society collection, in addition to the original bookplate, there are a dozen restrikes. One of these has penned on the reverse: "An impression from the



BOOKPLATES OF WASHINGTON, ADAMS, AND MONROE
Reproduction of original Washington plate at left



original Copper of Gen'l Washington's bookplate; given to me by L. W. Washington November 1861, and by me to Mr. Etting. B. M. (Brantz Mayer)." Another has "Taken from the original plate, and presented to H. S. Shurtleff by Mr. Hazeltine of Philadelphia Oct. 2, 1868." Another, undated, has "From original plate in possession of W^m Alex^r Smith, N. Y., rec'd by him from Geo. L. Washington, of Charlestown, W. Va." A restrike sold at Merwin-Clayton's, March 1, 1907, states that it was "Presented to Col. Henry J. Hunt in Feby 1861, by Mrs. Lewis Washington, at her house near Harper's Ferry, Va., as certified by Col. Hunt. The original plate was at this time owned by and in the possession of Lewis Washington." C. D. Allen states in 1894 that the late James Eddy Mauran of Newport knew the man who owned the copper and that after making a few restrikes, this man, fearing other restrikes would be made, cut the copper in pieces and threw it into the Schuylkill River. In spite of this story, the original copper was saved, and the owner, William Alexander Smith, presented it in 1907 to the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts in New York. Another original early copper, engraved after this same design, came into my possession several years ago.

There are also re-engraved forgeries of the plate, several of which were inserted in a collection of nearly two hundred sold at a sale conducted at Washington, D. C., March 9, 1863 by W. L. Wall & Co. The forgery was so poorly executed that the volumes were readily seen to be spurious and brought very low prices.

Books from the library of George Washington represent more than historical curiosities. When examining them, and looking over the catalogue of his books, we get an insight into his character that is not revealed in his biographies.

The second President, John Adams, had one of the largest libraries in the Colonies. He was a graduate of Harvard College, and was interested in books from the time he was a student at Cambridge until his death.

He, like Washington, was interested in works on the Eighteenth Century and collected Voltaire and others, but Fielding, Smollett and Burns were strangely missing from his collection. Cervantes and Shakespeare were in his library, however.

John Adams's Library contained many of the Greek and Latin classics, such as "Plato's Works" in three volumes, published in Paris in 1578, and the "Works of Aristotle," published in Paris in 1629. He also had early editions of Bacon, Cardinal Bembo, Diderot, Frederick the Great, John Locke, Isaac Newton and others. A duller list of books I have never seen than the catalogue of John Adams's Library. It consisted of many books which no gentleman's library should be without. This was, in the Eighteenth Century, an unfortunate admission. The lighter side of literature is sadly wanting. He had a copy of Johnson's "Lives of the English Poets," but there was no *Rasselas* or any of the imaginative works of the great Lexicographer.

John Adams had some excellent Americana, including tracts of the highest degree of rarity; among them are Winslow's "Good News from New England," 1634, and Joseph Warren's "Oration on the Boston Massacre, 1772," which was presented to him by General Warren.

There are several volumes of "Americana" in the Adams library which at one time belonged to the Rev. Thomas Prince, one of the earliest collectors in Massachusetts, who bequeathed them to his old Church in Boston. Two of the Adams lot contain the bookplate of the Old South Library. John Adams appreciated the books of Thomas Prince and how much the following narrative will explain. Adams wrote on October 23, 1811, "I mounted up to the balcony of Dr. Sewall's church where was assembled a collection which Mr. Prince had devoted himself to make in the twentieth year of his age. Such a treasure never existed anywhere else and can never again be made." In the catalogue of John Adams's Library issued by the Trustees of the Public Library of the

City of Boston, 1917, there is the following illuminating note: "It seems probably that on one or more of his visits to this balcony Mr. Adams borrowed these volumes and failed to return them." From this I must admit that he had a proper appreciation of the great rarities in the Prince collection.

John Adams was a constant collector of books throughout his life. Living to an age of over ninety years, he spent much of the latter part of his life in reading books on learned or abstruse subjects, many in foreign languages, and always for the improvement of his mind. In 1822, when in his eighty-seventh year, he presented to the Town of Quincy what he termed the "fragments" of his library, reserving only a few volumes for the consolation of his waning days. Probably some of his books had been given to children and friends, yet the library remained pretty much in its entirety. It contained 2756 volumes, one of the largest libraries in New England at that time. One of his conditions was that a catalogue should be printed, which was done in 1823. Since the library could not be cared for adequately and, in fact, some volumes were stolen, and since the nature of the books made them of little use to a small community, the Town of Quincy turned over the collection in 1893 to the Boston Public Library. In 1917 a Catalogue of the collection was published, containing nearly three hundred additional titles received from various members of the Adams family since John Adams's death.

John Adams's bookplate was an armorial plate, with the arms of the Boylston family, bordered by a garter with a quotation from Tacitus and the whole surrounded by thirteen stars. Charles Francis Adams, in the *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, Series 2, Volume 2, page 84, gives an account of the book-plate, stating that the general idea of the plate, with the motto and the stars, was in the design of a seal for the United States which John Adams had planned in 1776 but which was not finally adopted; also that the plate was engraved by Carpenter of

London in 1785 or 1786 and the original copper had been lost. There are, however, photographic reproductions on modern paper.

There are other plates carrying the name of John Adams, but none of these concerned the President. A woodcut plate of "John Adam's Library," which was printed at Hudson, N. Y., was owned by a member of a Scotch family living in Columbia County, N. Y. Another plate: "John Adams, His Book, 17—", is rudely engraved by I. Cunningham and is of another family. There were thirty-seven John Adamses listed as heads of families in the Massachusetts Census of 1790. A third John Adams plate, armorial with the arms consisting of a star centered in a cross, is undoubtedly English.

Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, was a book collector in every sense of the word. He had an inquisitive mind, something like Benjamin Franklin's, and he liked to secure first hand information from original sources. Jefferson bought books on art, literature, religion, architecture, philosophy, chemistry, husbandry—in fact, on almost every subject. He corresponded with the great men of his time and, although a politician, was interested in many things besides politics. When he built Monticello he wanted to have therein the best books, not only of the ancient world, the great classics of European literature, but the works of his contemporaries and friends. He was so much interested in his library that he made a catalogue of it himself, the classification being based upon Lord Bacon's Divisions of Knowledge. In the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society is a manuscript catalogue of Jefferson's library, in which is written, "1783, Mar. 6. 2540 vols." The catalogue extends through 230 pages, and in the front of the book is an elaborate classification. On the third leaf is the manuscript entry, "This mark denotes the books I have. Those unmarked I mean to procure."

Jefferson was one of the early collectors of "Americana" and bought almost everything relating to the

early history of this country, including some of the rarest tracts. He had these tracts bound by his own binder. Among the books were De Bry's famous collection of "Voyages," Purchas's "Pilgrims," and Smith's "History of Virginia."

Jefferson formed the library of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, and he made long lists of books most desired by students. He not only was interested in the library of the University, but was its architect as well. He frequently wrote to his agents in Europe trying to secure the best books on architecture. He wanted to have the buildings at the University of Virginia practical and comfortable, but at the same time beautiful. Jefferson did not like the style of some of the University buildings in Williamsburg and states that "buildings are often erected by individuals at considerable expense—to give these symmetry and taste would not increase their cost." This precept was one of the wisest uttered by Jefferson, for nothing truer was ever said. Jefferson secured the great works on architecture of Inigo Jones, Vitruvius, Palladio, Gibbs and Piranesi and many others. Not only did he buy books on architecture but also on interior decoration, such as Chippendale's "Cabinet Makers Designs," 1755, and "Descriptions of the Houses and Gardens at Stowe," 1783. Unfortunately many of these books were destroyed by the fire in the library of Congress in 1851. Fire, as will be seen, later, was Thomas Jefferson's special curse.

Jefferson started very young to form a collection of books. It was about the year 1760 that he began to buy books in Williamsburg, then the center of culture. Ten years later he suffered a severe loss.

In the year 1770 the house at Shadwell was destroyed by fire and Jefferson then moved to Monticello, where his preparations for a residence were sufficiently advanced to enable him to make it his permanent home. He was from home when the fire took place at Shadwell, and the first inquiry he made of the negro who carried him the news was after his books. "Oh, my

young master," he replied, carelessly, "they were all burnt; but, ah! we saved your fiddle." Curiously enough it was on account of another fire that his splendid collection is now safely, we hope, preserved in the Library of Congress.

On July 22, 1814, the joint naval and military forces of the British under Admiral Sir George Cockburn and Major General Ross entered Washington, and set fire to many of the state buildings, including the Capitol, which then housed the Library of Congress. The loss of books and records was irreparable.

Indignation was expressed by everyone. Not since the burning of the Alexandrian library by the Mahometans, it was said, had such a deed been perpetrated. Even the English newspapers were unanimous in their condemnation; a Nottingham journal stated that it was "an act without precedent in modern wars or in any other wars since the inroads of the Barbarians who conflagrated Rome and overthrew the Roman Empire."

Both General Ross and Admiral Cockburn lamented the destruction of the library. "Had I known it in time" said the former, "the books most certainly would have been saved." The Admiral gave practical proof of his sense of the loss, for a short time ago I was fortunate enough to secure a book which he himself rescued with his own hands from the burning Capitol! This historic volume is a folio bound in half sheep. Its title is "An Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of the United States, For the Year 1810. Stated in pursuance of the standing order of the House of Representatives of the United States, passed on the thirtieth day of December, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one. Washington: A. & G. Way, Printers. 1812."

Its historical rescue from the burning Capitol is briefly recorded by the Admiral himself, who has written inside the volume "Taken in the President's room in the Capitol, at the destruction of that building by the British, on the capture of Washington 24th

August 1814 by Admiral Cockburn and by him presented to his eldest brother Sir James Cockburn of Langton, Bart, Governor of Bermuda."

The volume is entirely undamaged by fire, and its green morocco label, lettered in gold on the front cover "President of the United States" is intact.

Jefferson was as indignant as anyone at the terrible loss caused by the fire, and decided to sell his great library to the national government at far less than its value. He wrote to Congressman Samuel H. Smith the following letter:

"You know my collection, its condition and extent. I have been fifty years making it, and have spared no pains, opportunity or expense, to make it what it is. While residing in Paris, I devoted every afternoon I was disengaged, for a summer or two, in examining all the principal bookstores, turning over every book with my own hand, and putting by everything which related to America, and, indeed, whatever is rare and valuable in every science. Besides this, I had standing orders during the whole time I was in Europe on its principal book-marts, particularly Amsterdam, Frankfort, Madrid, and London, for such works relating to America as could not be found in Paris. So that in that department particularly such a collection was made as probably can never again be effected, because it is hardly probable that the same opportunities, the same time, industry, perseverance, and expense, with some knowledge of the bibliography of the subject, would again happen to be in concurrence. During the same period, and after my return to America, I was led to procure, also, whatever related to the duties of those in the high concerns of the nation, so that the collection, which I suppose is of between nine and ten thousand volumes, while it includes what is chiefly valuable in science and literature generally extends more particularly to the American Statesman."

Of course, when the project of the sale of Jefferson's Library to the government was first broached, it

created a great uproar. The Washington correspondent of the *Boston Gazette* wrote, "The grand library of Mr. Jefferson will undoubtedly be purchased with all its finery and philosophical nonsense." Some of the members of Congress regarded the books as, "immoral, indecent, irreligious, and generally revolutionary." Congressmen would!!! However, the measure passed and the government secured, for the sum of \$23,950, Jefferson's library, probably one-quarter of what it was worth even at that time. It consisted when purchased by the Library of Congress of about 7000 volumes and was without doubt the best chosen collection of its size in this country. The library was removed from Monticello to Washington in May 1815, and a Catalogue was printed in that year, which in its 170 pages comprised exclusively the books purchased from Jefferson.

From the time of the sale until his death, Jefferson continued the collecting of books. This second library, consisting of about a thousand volumes, he bequeathed to the University of Virginia, but since the condition of his estate required that the library be disposed of to pay debts, it was sold at auction in Washington, February 27, 1829, by Nathaniel P. Poor, with a printed Catalogue of 931 items. Thus many books with his autograph were scattered through the country. Incidentally the Library of Congress bought a few important volumes and manuscripts at this sale.

It was the irony of fate that in another disastrous fire which burned the Library of Congress, December 24, 1851, about two-thirds of the original Jefferson collection, including the newspapers, were destroyed.

Jefferson never possessed a bookplate. Only occasionally he wrote his name on the title-pages of volumes, and because of the sale in 1829, some of these turn up for sale. The American Antiquarian Society only recently obtained a bound volume of the early pamphlet reports of its own organization, of which Jefferson was elected a member in 1814. On the first text leaf of the first pamphlet are his initials and

at the top of the first page of the last pamphlet is his autograph. He had a secret and ingenious way of marking his books. Before the signature letter "J," or interchangeably "I," he wrote in a microscopic hand his own first initial "T." After the signature letter "T," if there were that many signatures in the book, he wrote a letter "J," thus having his own initials "T. J." hidden in each volume. The books now remaining in the Library of Congress are thus marked. In the *New York Evening Post* of October 22, 1898, Ainsworth R. Spofford, Librarian of Congress, wrote a long article on Thomas Jefferson's Books, which forms an excellent and authentic source of information.

The fourth, fifth and sixth Presidents—Madison, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams—were all collectors of books. Their activities were mostly in the field of Americana and all three were purchasers of pamphlets and tracts relating to the first settlements in their native states. They collected articles about themselves, and their activities while President. I do not think they were controlled unduly by vanity, but their careers were really interwoven with the formative period of this country. Thomas Jefferson was interested in the discovery of the western portion of this hemisphere and gathered all the material he could on this interesting subject. It was he who was the inspiration of Lewis and Clark in their great journey across the continent. Madison, Monroe and Adams also followed in Jefferson's footsteps and collected books relating to this great enterprise.

Madison, especially after his retirement, was a great reader of books and was considered by literary men as their patron. His library, which consisted largely of books sent to him by numerous authors, occupied an ample room in his house at Montpelier. He never possessed a bookplate. A considerable number of his books were sold by Stan. V. Henkels, May 9, 1899, in the final settlement of the estate of Dolly Madison.

President Monroe, although not a scholar or a man

of general culture, was especially interested in history. He must have had a fairly large library, judging from the manuscript numbers entered on his type-set book-label, of which there were two varieties of border. The remainder of his private library was sold at auction by W. M. Morrison, auctioneer, at Washington on February 24, 1849.

John Quincy Adams was much given to reading, especially in history and poetry, and possessed a large library. This collection is now housed in a stone building next to the John Quincy Adams home in Quincy, Mass., and is owned by the Adams Memorial Society, formed in 1927 to take over the Adams house and to keep it open for the use of the family as a memorial to their ancestor. The library consists of nearly ten thousand volumes, although about a tenth of these were added by the two following generations. In 1933, the most valuable of the volumes, about 750 in number, were deposited by the family in the Boston Athenæum. John Quincy Adams had at least four different bookplates. The first was a crudely engraved label, with his name, and the copy in the American Antiquarian Society collection bears the date "1782" in his handwriting. The other three plates are heraldic, with the family arms, excellently engraved, but without name of engraver.

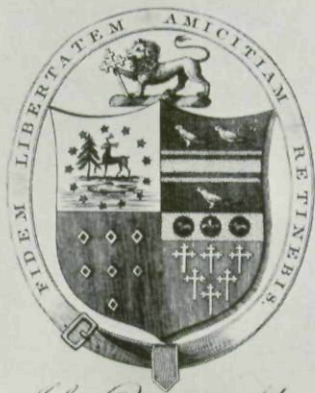
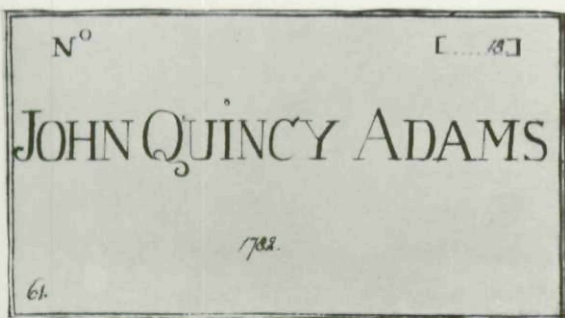
With John Quincy Adams ends the first fifty years of the Republic. He was the last President who came under the influence of Eighteenth Century culture. The libraries of the first six Presidents all contained volumes of Chesterfield, Smollett, Goldsmith, Sterne, Dr. Johnson and Voltaire. There were, of course, religious books in the Presidential collections, but they are usually found, in the bookseller's parlance, in "good unused condition." Although "Tom Jones" was in nearly all the libraries of the Presidents I failed to find a single volume of Richardson's "Pamela or Virtue Rewarded." Perhaps they felt that election to the Presidency was sufficient reward and acknowledgment of their political chastity!



John Quincy Adams.

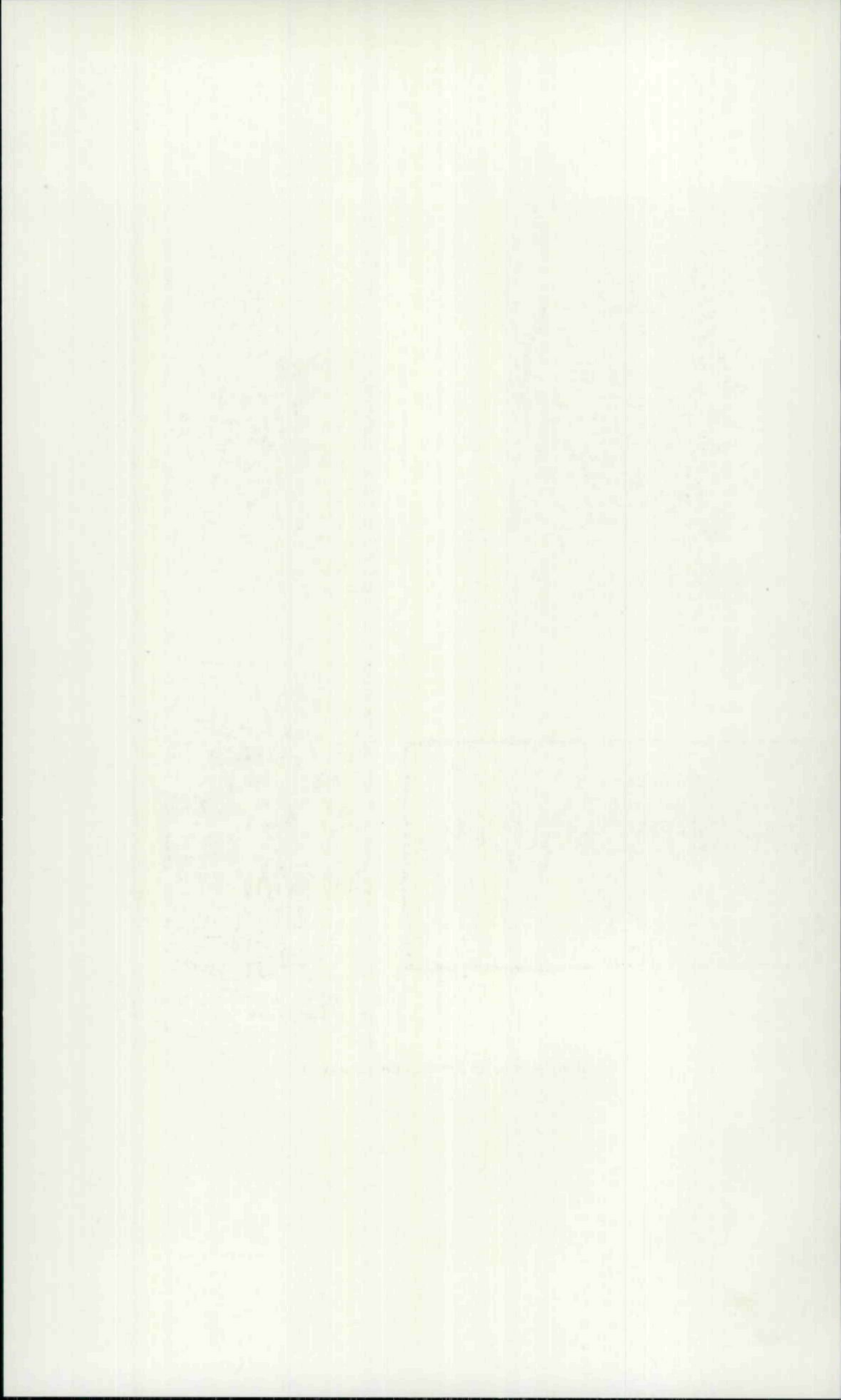


John Quincy Adams.



John Quincy Adams.

BOOKPLATES OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS



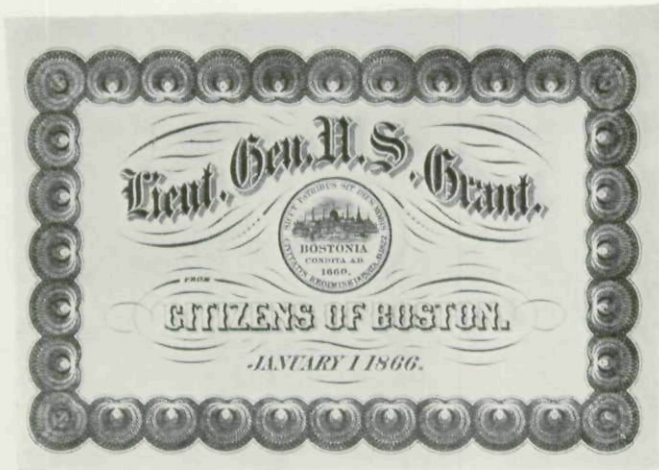
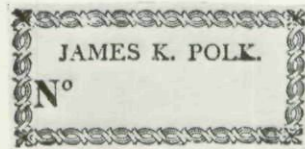
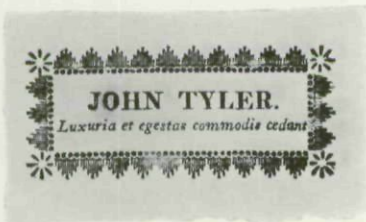
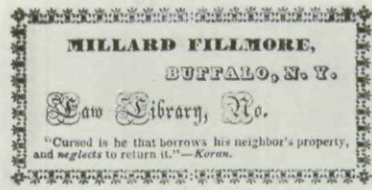
We have not the space to dwell at length on the Presidents between John Quincy Adams and Lincoln. Jackson, although not a man of culture, was a lover of literature and frequently read Shakespeare. He had a fairly extensive library at The Hermitage, although an inventory of his house made in 1825 showed only one bookcase in three sections. He had no bookplate but often scribbled his signature on the title pages of his books. The Hermitage was burned with all its contents in 1834. Jackson ordered it rebuilt and lived there until his death in 1845. A number of books from his library was sold at the American Art Association, April 13, 1927.

Van Buren's library, although large, consisted mostly of law-books, theology and political economy. About eighteen years ago one of my present associates, Mr. Percy E. Lawler, who was then working for a New York firm of booksellers, was asked to go to Fishkill Landing on the Hudson to the old Verplanck homestead to look at the library of President Van Buren. He arrived on a raw February day and was shown into a bare, unheated room in which he was told the Order of the Cincinnati was inaugurated. At one end of this room were a large number of books in piles on the floor. They had previously been kept in a barn that was not entirely waterproof, for all, or the majority of them, were so rain-soaked that it was impossible to separate one leaf from another. The loss, however, was not so great as they consisted of uninteresting volumes of theology which their proud authors had presented to the President. Van Buren had a small engraved bookplate. In the Association of the Bar of the City of New York is a collection of law-books from his library, with a bookplate stating that they were the gift of Silas B. Brownell in 1904. A number of books from his library were sold at the Walpole Galleries, July 31, 1923.

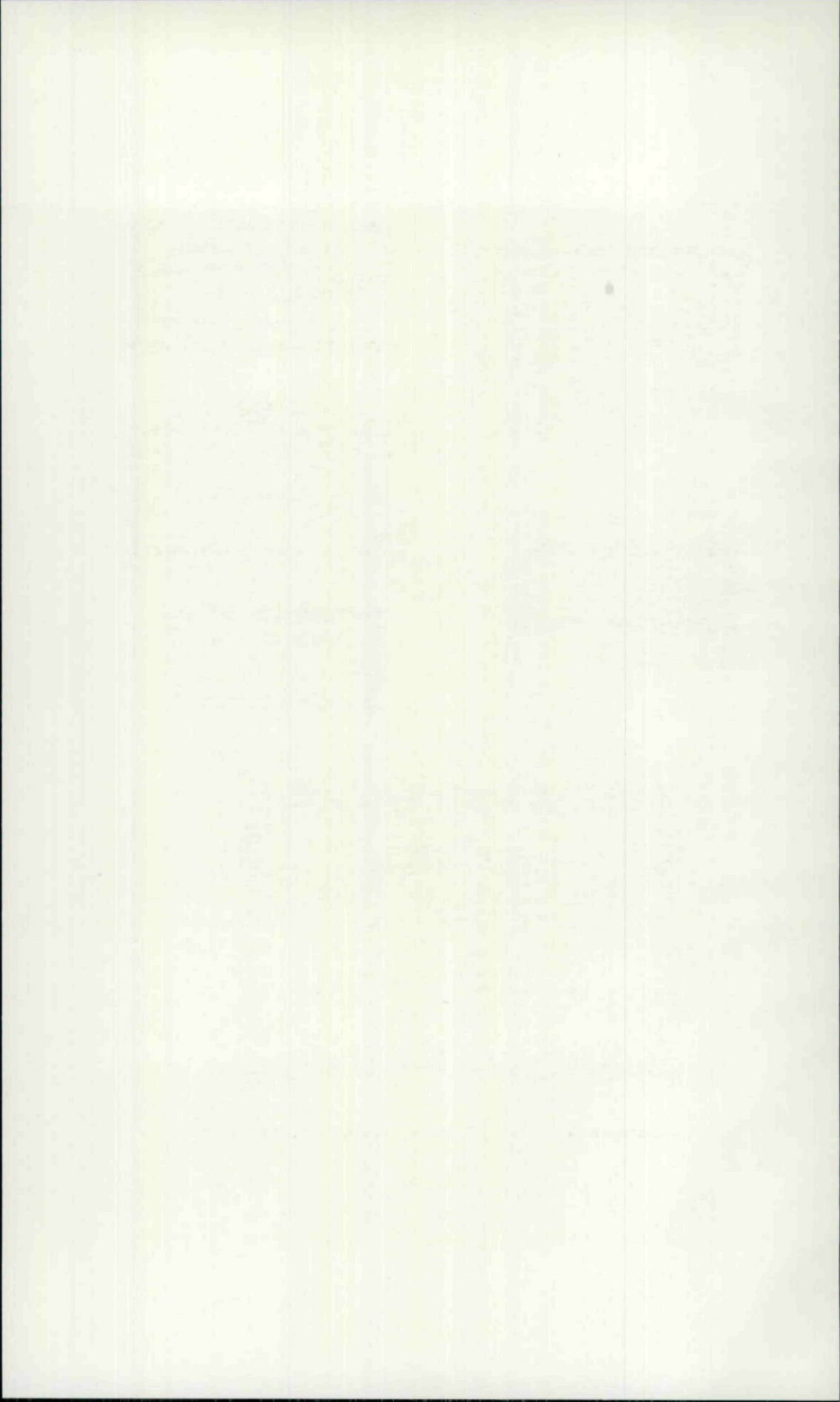
William Henry Harrison, descended from a distinguished Virginia family, had a small library, containing a number of good books either inherited or

acquired. He died within a month after assuming the Presidency, therefore had not the later lifetime granted to many Presidents for reading and leisure. He possessed no bookplate. John Tyler owned an extensive library and was well educated and well read—familiar with the classics, with Addison, Steele, Goldsmith, Johnson and Byron, to whom he frequently referred in letters to his children. Much of his library was destroyed during the Civil War. In one of the volumes which descended to his son, Lyon G. Tyler, the latter wrote "This was one of the few books of his library preserved from the ravages of the Northern Troops at his residence, 'Sherwood Forest,' Charles City Co., Virginia." President Tyler owned a small book label, with the motto "Luxuria et egesta commodis cedunt," which he probably acquired soon after his father's death in 1813.

The years from 1845 to 1861 were rather barren for presidential libraries, since Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce and Buchanan were more interesting to the student of politics than to the literary historian. The lawyers among them gathered American law-books of the period, which take almost the lowest place in the mind of the collector. President Fillmore might be excepted from the above general statement. He possessed a library of about 5000 volumes and had two printed book-labels, one for his "Law Library" and one for his "Miscellaneous Library." In the Grosvenor Library Bulletin for September 1920, is a lengthy account of Fillmore's library, based on a manuscript catalogue of the books drawn in the President's hand. The collection contained a great number of miscellaneous books on history, travels, education and literature. Noteworthy are three books on Wines, showing that the statesmen of that day were far from teetotalers. Shortly after Mr. Fillmore's death in 1874 his library was sold at auction. Some of his most interesting books appeared in the De Puy Sale at Andersons in 1925. It is recorded that when Fillmore took possession of the Executive Mansion, it contained



BOOKPLATES OF VAN BUREN, TYLER, POLK, FILLMORE, AND GRANT



no books, not even a Bible. Fillmore secured an appropriation from Congress for the purchase of books and fitted up as a library the largest and most cheerful room on the second story.

Franklin Pierce owned a fairly good library of standard literature, about two hundred volumes of which are now owned by his nieces at Hillsborough, N. H., although some of the especially interesting volumes were selected by the New Hampshire Historical Society.

We come now to Abraham Lincoln. He was, as is well known to everyone, a great reader. I cannot state that he was a book collector but there is no doubt that he was a book lover. His copy of Shakespeare was purchased by the late Henry Clay Folger and is now placed in his great library of Shakespeariana in Washington. Lincoln had no time in the four years and forty days in which he was President to devote himself to books, although the reading of his younger days was reflected in his every act. No man that ever lived probably had a greater command over the English language than Abraham Lincoln. He studied the lexicon and there is in existence today his own copy of Noah Webster's Dictionary for Primary Schools, published in New York in 1833. On the fly-leaf is written: "A. Lincoln, Esq. Attorney and Counsellor at Law, Springfield, Ill." and on the title page is the autograph, "A. Lincoln, Springfield, Ill. Sangamon County."

Lincoln had many books of sterling quality, such as Gibbons' "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Hallam's "View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages," and other books of history, poetry and philosophy. In 1860, Lincoln was elected the sixteenth President of the United States. He knew that troublesome times were upon him. He gave to his law partner, William H. Herndon, a large part of his literary library just before his departure for Washington to take up his presidential duties. According to Robert Lincoln, Herndon was actuated by an intense

malice and possessed by a most ingenious imagination. Lincoln had many law books which would be worthless were it not for the magic name, "A. Lincoln" written on the title page. His own copy of the first edition of his debates with Stephen Douglas, published in Columbus in 1860, was in the famous Lambert collection. Lincoln gave it to a friend and it bears the following autograph inscription on the fly-leaf: "A. Lincoln to W. M. Cowgill." Inserted in this copy are two autograph letters of Lincoln's in one of which he modestly states that "Being desirous of preserving in some permanent form the late joint discussion between Douglas and myself, ten days ago I wrote to Dr. Ray, requesting him to forward to me, by express, two sets of the Nos. of the Tribune, which contain the reports of those discussions—Up to date I have no word from him on the subject—Will you, if in your power, procure them and forward them to me by Express? If you will, I will pay all charges, and be greatly obliged to boot."

In the Mitchell autograph sale held at Henkels, December 5, 1894, were included twelve titles, in twenty-two volumes, from the Law library of Lincoln & Herndon, with the firm name entered in each volume.

Of the immediate successors to Lincoln, Andrew Johnson had few books, but President Hayes had a large library of over 8000 volumes, about half of which was Americana and western items, including the collection of Robert Clarke, the Cincinnati dealer and collector. This library was removed in 1916 from the Hayes homestead to the Hayes Memorial at Fremont, Ohio. Mr. Hayes had no personal bookplate.

President Garfield, highly educated and a college president at twenty-six, possessed a library of about 2500 volumes, comprising the classics, modern literature, history, political science and economics, with many books containing his marginal notes. This library is still at his home "Lawnfield," Mentor, Ohio. His bookplate, with the motto "Inter Folia Fructus,"

was a printed label, and has at least three slight variations. President Arthur, an honor student at college and possessing literary taste and culture, possessed a large library, principally strong in literature, biography and economics. His books descended chiefly to his son, Chester Alan Arthur, now of Colorado Springs, Colorado. His bookplate was the Arthur crest, with the motto "Impelle Obstantia."

It is not generally known that Grant was interested in good books. When a student at West Point, hardly twenty-one years old, he wrote as follows:

U. S. Military Academy West Point
March 8, '43

MESSRS. CAREY & HART
SIRS

Within enclosed you will find \$2.00. the cost of the illustrated editions of "Charles O'Malley" and "Harry Lorrequer." These works will be sent to my address at this Post Office.

Yours &

Cadet U. S. Grant

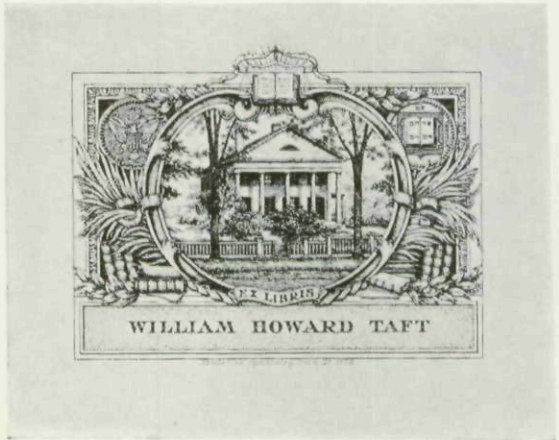
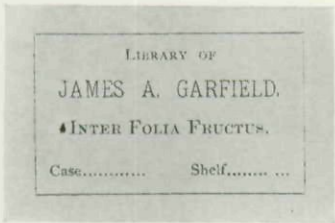
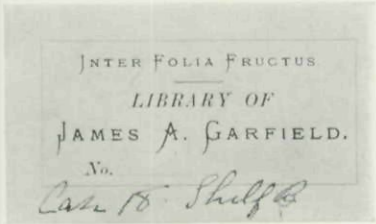
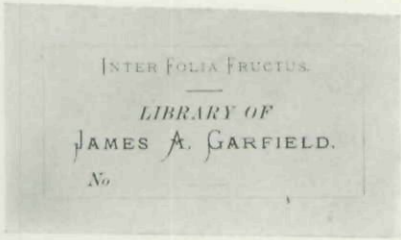
General Grant's rather large library descended to his son, Ulysses S. Grant, Jr. The son spent his last days in San Diego, California, and his father's library was for a long time in glass-door bookcases on the mezzanine of the U. S. Grant Hotel. When Dr. Edgar Hewitt was organizing the San Diego Museum from material left by exhibitors at the 1915 Exposition, he secured the Grant library as a gift, and it is now in the beautiful California Building in Balboa Park. The library contains about 1200 volumes broadly selected, chiefly in the fields of history—ranging from Herodotus to Macauley—and literature, including the American and English classics. There is also a set of Audubon's "Birds and Quadrapeds," and the Bible upon which the President took the oath of office. The reason for the excellent selection was due to the group of Bostonians, who learning that the White House has no adequate library, raised a fund to purchase such a collection, and inserted in each book a bookplate with the wording: "Lieut. Gen. U. S. Grant, from Citizens of Boston, January 1, 1866."

Grover Cleveland was also a reader of good books. He owned quite a respectable library of about 2000 books. He did not have a bookplate but his wife had. The design portrays a woman writing on a scroll with a view of the Capitol and the Arms of the United States. The lettering reads "Ex-libris Frances Folsom Cleveland." President Cleveland was not much of a reader in the later years of his life, but when a young man at Buffalo read eagerly the current literature and biography of the period. His library, as it remained at his death, is still in the house at Princeton.

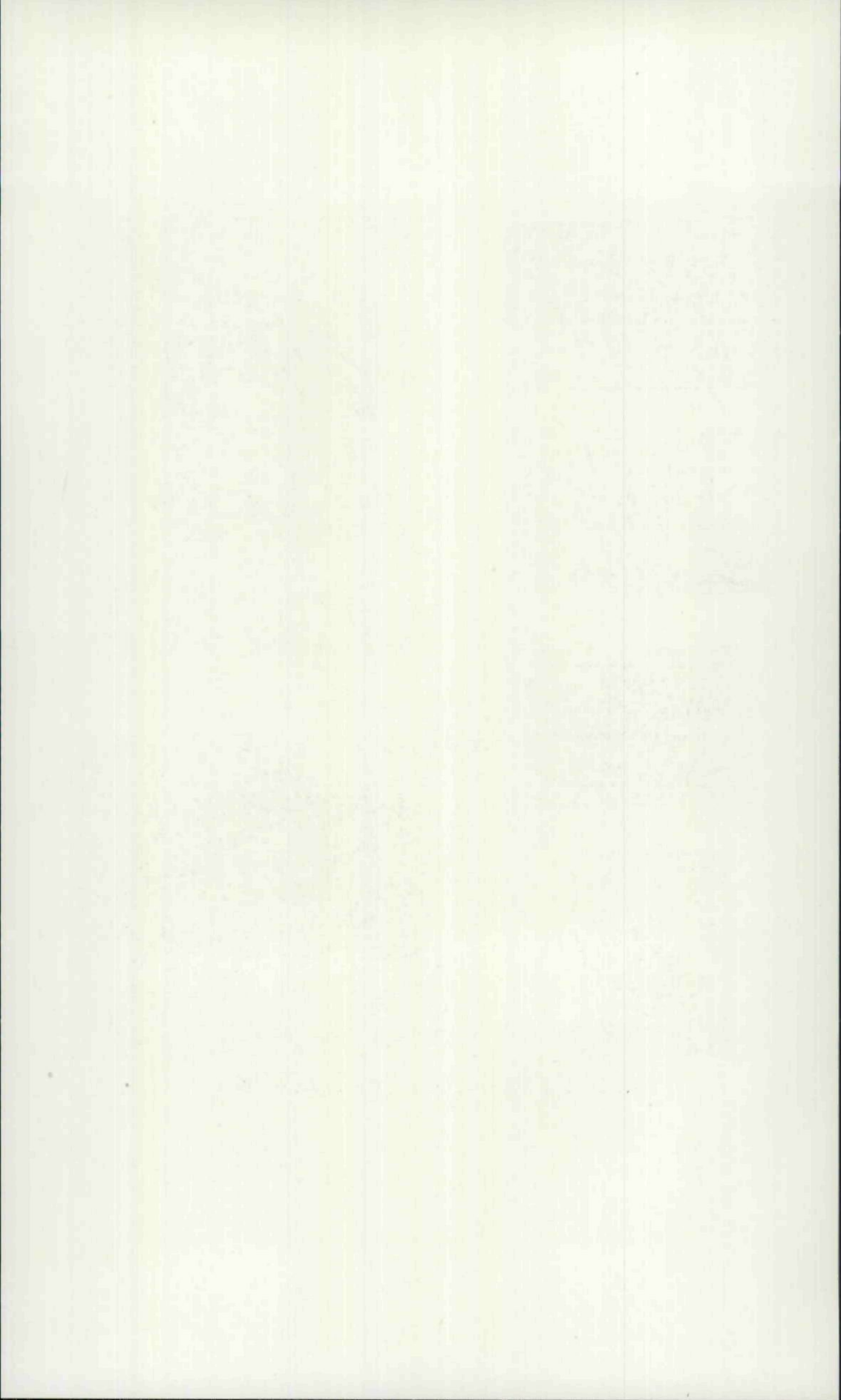
Benjamin Harrison had a good library, chiefly of books which he wished to read or use—literature, history, biography and reference books, most of which are in Mrs. Harrison's house at Indianapolis. Like other recent Presidents, he often sought relaxation in mystery stories. He continued in the practice of law after the Presidency and accumulated many law books, some of which went to his son, Russell, and some to his daughter, Mrs. James Blaine Walker, Jr. President Harrison never owned a bookplate, according to his widow. An armorial plate of a Benjamin Harrison is of another family.

President McKinley had a modest library at his home in Canton, Ohio. Upon the death of Mrs. McKinley, it was divided among the heirs, each picking out what appealed to him. It contained four or five hundred volumes, the greater portion devoted to historical or economic subjects. The President and his brother, Abner McKinley, practiced law at Canton for a long number of years and jointly owned a law library. About 1890, Mr. Abner McKinley opened a law office in New York City and took the library with him. After his death in 1904, the law library was sold.

Theodore Roosevelt was a scholarly President. He was a great reader and a great collector. His study, gun-room and trophy-room at Sagamore Hill all had books from the floor to the ceiling. He started to read early in life and often disapproved, according to Owen



BOOKPLATES OF GARFIELD, ARTHUR, ROOSEVELT, AND TAFT



Wister, of the author's moral standpoint, especially when it did not agree with his own. Wister related the following:

"Senior (Roosevelt) and sophomore (Wister) set small store upon most literature perfectly nice, well-behaved prose and verse, that read as if Alfred Tennyson or Charles Lamb had been diluted with warm water, and stirred round in a teacup by a teaspoon. But Roosevelt was not ready—never became ready—to go as far the Tom Jones way as I went, even in that day."

When Roosevelt became older, he started to collect books on subjects that interested him, particularly on birds and big-game hunting. Of the latter, we must refer to his autobiography.

"Now, I am very proud of my big-game library. I suppose there must be many big-game libraries in Continental Europe, and possibly in England, more extensive than mine, but I have not happened to come across any such library in this country. Some of the originals go back to the sixteenth century, and there are copies or reproductions of the two or three most famous hunting books of the Middle Ages, such as the Duke of York's translation of "Gaston Phoebus," and the queer book of the Emperor Maximilian. It is only very occasionally that I meet any one who cares for any of these books. On the other hand, I expect to find many friends who will turn naturally to some of the old or the new books of poetry or romance or history to which we of the household habitually turn."

Roosevelt was proud of his reading and his acquaintance with rare and unusual books. He states somewhere that he was in no sense a collector, which is very misleading as he gives himself away when writing of his big-game library. He thought book collecting did not go with the wide-open spaces, or the other manly sports he so often mentions. Hunting after rare books has more thrills to the minute, in my estimation, than trapping wild animals in the jungle. The latter is child's play compared with it.

President Roosevelt might have accumulated a very large library through presentation copies alone. No president ever received so many gifts from writers and rulers, all over the world. Also, when he was editor of the *Outlook* he wrote many reviews of books, which brought additional volumes to his library. His book-plate was really his father's plate, from which he struck off impressions from the original copper, since his father bore the same name and died when he was in college. The library today remains at Sagamore Hill, as part of the undistributed Roosevelt estate.

Speaking of President Roosevelt reminds me of old Bibles, for he was the only President of the United States, who at his first induction into office, was not sworn on the Holy Scriptures. Most of the Presidents use the Bible at the inaugural and forget about it afterwards. Roosevelt came to Buffalo when it was evident that McKinley would not survive the assassin's bullet. "Everything had to be done hurriedly, and at the death of President McKinley, Mr. Roosevelt took the oath of office in the house of Mr. Ansley Wilcox, a prominent lawyer of Buffalo. The latter gentleman, in a letter dated October 15th, 1903, writes:

According to my best recollection, no Bible was used, but President Roosevelt was sworn with uplifted hand. There were Bibles, and some quite interesting ones, in the room and readily accessible, but no one had thought of it in advance, there being little opportunity to prepare for this ceremony, and when Judge Hazel advanced to administer the oath to the new President he simply asked him to hold up his right hand, as is customary in this State.

The subject of Bibles of the Presidents is a fascinating one and I regret I cannot refer to it here. I cannot refrain from mentioning that Washington's Family Bible is in the Old Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

The beloved William Howard Taft was interested in books in a mild sort of way. No one was more painstaking and thorough than he in looking up original sources of information when forming an opinion, whether as President or Chief Justice. He liked to

have books close to hand. He was interested enough in collecting to have his own bookplate. It is handsomely engraved and depicts his old homestead at Millbury, Massachusetts, with the scales of Justice and the arms of the United States. The books which he accumulated, rather miscellaneous in character, are mostly in his summer home at Murray Bay, Canada, although his law library is still located in his house at Washington.

Woodrow Wilson used books, but had no real love of them. He was like other University professors who use libraries but do not form them. Like all historians he had about him the apparatus of his profession, the works of reference and other books that would direct him in his studies. He liked up-to-date volumes, although he consulted original editions when writing his histories. He was a real adept at finding material, which is no mean praise. Woodrow Wilson used only one bookplate, which depicts a shelf of books, a facsimile of his signature, and the following quotation of his own making:

Council and Light
Knowledge with Vision
And Strength and Life and Pleasure withal.

Another plate was made for him, after his retirement from the Presidency, which consisted of a portrait of himself with the Church of Notre Dame in the background. According to Mrs. Wilson, he never used this plate in his books. His library is still intact in Washington.

Warren G. Harding, it is needless to state, was not a book-collector. I would like to claim him among the fraternity, but I regret I cannot. All his personal property including his library went to Mrs. Harding at the time of his death and she in turn gave the books to the Harding Memorial Association of Marion, Ohio.

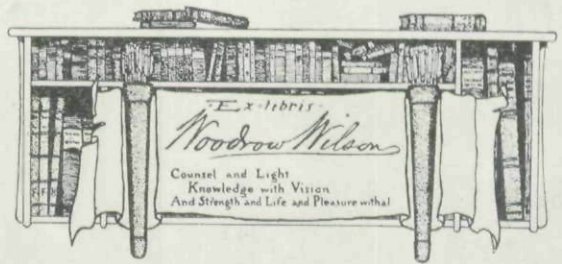
Calvin Coolidge will probably go down in history as one of the wisest of the Presidents. He had the reputation of being extremely cautious and I have a presentation copy of his *Life*, by William Allen White

which seems to corroborate this statement. It bears on the fly-leaf in the President's writing: "Without recourse. Calvin Coolidge."

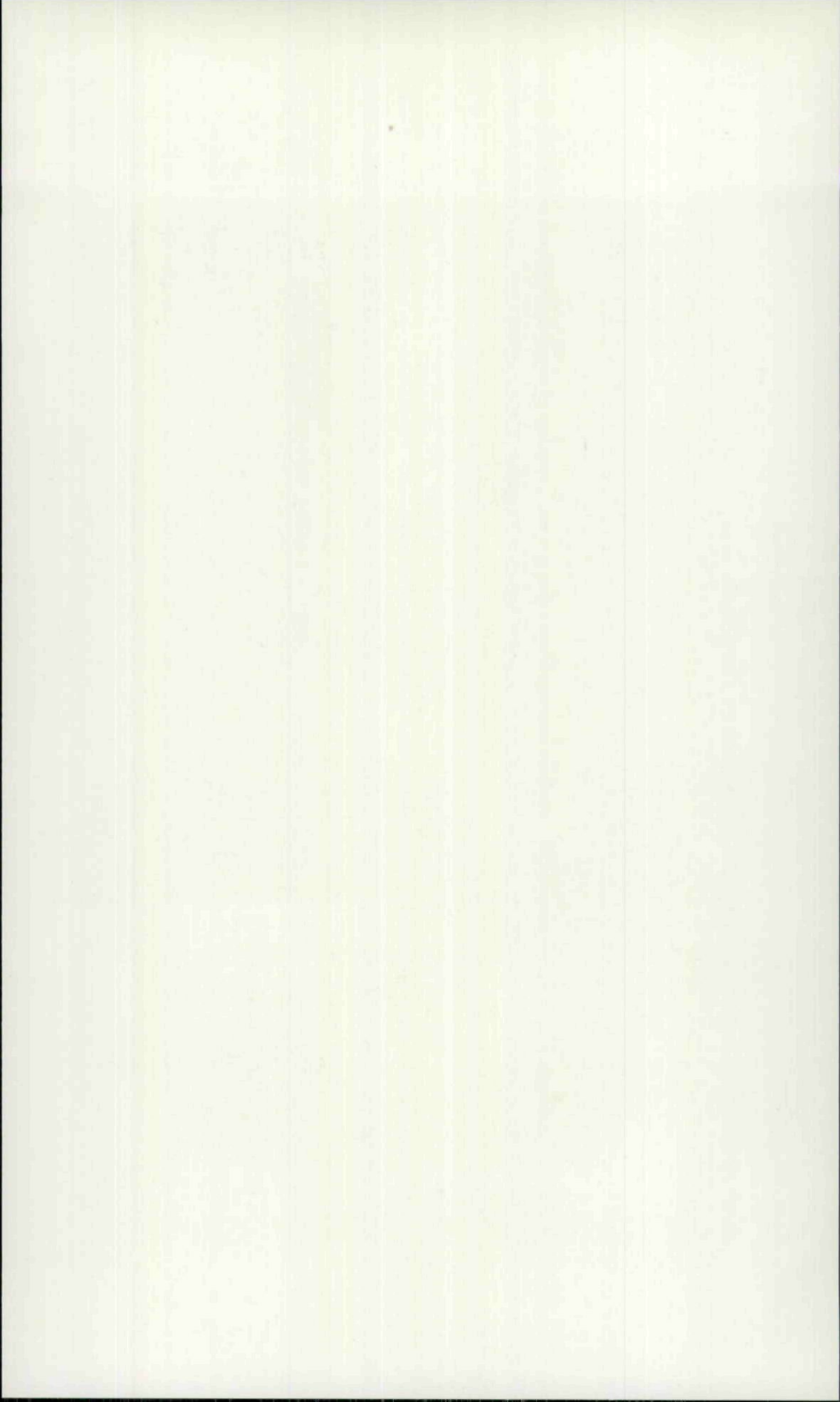
Mr. Coolidge was interested in the news of the world. He read of the sale in London of the original manuscript of "Alice in Wonderland" which I had purchased. On my return from abroad in May, 1928, the President asked me to lunch at the White House and to bring with me the manuscript. I found that "Alice in Wonderland" was one of his favorite books, that he was interested in Shakespeare, that he liked to own good editions. He asked me details of the first publication of "Alice in Wonderland" and I tried to explain to him that the first edition, issued in 1865, not being altogether to Carroll's liking, was suppressed. "Suppressed?" said the President, "I did not know there was anything off-color in Alice!"

Mr. Coolidge accumulated a large library when at the White House, from books presented to him and those acquired by himself. When he left Washington in 1929, forty cases of books, with over four thousand volumes, were sent to Northampton. Later, when the homestead at Plymouth was remodelled, place was made for these books and also some of the interesting books which he had read as a child and in his early life. When his friend, Frank W. Stearns, in 1926 sought to present him with a bookplate, Sidney L. Smith was commissioned to perform the task. He finally made a drawing with two panels, the lower showing the signing of the Mayflower Compact and the upper the homestead at Plymouth. But ill health intervened in 1928 and Mr. Smith was unable to cut the plate on copper, dying the following year. Timothy Cole was then engaged to engrave a plate on wood, which was finished in 1929, showing the Plymouth homestead, and above it, a bust of Washington.

Mr. Hoover is the greatest book collector among the Presidents since Jefferson. He has an unusual faculty of delving in out-of-the-way places; in searching for material not readily accessible. He resembles Jefferson



BOOKPLATES OF WILSON, COOLIDGE, HOOVER, AND ROOSEVELT



in that on all his journeys he gathered volumes that in time would be valuable to the student. Thus, when he was in China, in 1899, he gathered a most comprehensive collection of books, in many languages, on China and the Chinese people. This he gave to Stanford University, becoming the nucleus of the great Chinese library there. The Hoover War Library at Stanford is also a monument to his diligence and foresight as a collector. He gathered all through the War every document, pamphlet, proclamation, periodical or broadside relating thereto, which in time will be the foundation material for the history of the great contest. This achievement is the greatest of any of the Presidents in the field of book collecting.

In 1912, Herbert Clark Hoover and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover, issued in London a translation of Agricola's "De Re Metallica," from the first edition published in Basle in 1556. It is a treatise on mining and metals and is one of the classics of its kind. The notes by Mr. Hoover show a large knowledge of the subject and an intimate acquaintance with the rare books of the period. In fact, there are twelve books printed before 1500 mentioned in the original edition of Agricola. Mr. Hoover succeeded in securing all twelve!

In 1930, Mr. Hoover signed the bill making the Vollbehr collection of Incunabula the property of the Nation. Included in it was a splendid copy of the Gutenberg Bible, printed on vellum. This acquisition is one of the notable achievements of Mr. Hoover's administration. It has endeared him to book lovers everywhere.

Mr. Hoover's bookplate is a reproduction of one of the woodcuts in a very early book on mining, "Ein Nutzlich Bergbüchlin von Allen Metallen," 1557, with an interesting border. Christopher Morley's article in the "Saturday Review of Literature" in 1932 gives a graphic description of Mr. Hoover as a book collector.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, thirty-second President

of the United States, has been interested in the gathering of books and manuscripts ever since he was a student at Harvard College. His researches into the early history of the American Navy have been noteworthy. Mr. Roosevelt is an adept at discovering original sources and has succeeded in uncovering historical material hitherto unknown. "Our First Frigates, Some Unpublished Facts about their Construction, by the Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt assistant secretary of the Navy," was published in 1914, and the President in this little pamphlet shows his skill as an archivist. Mr. Roosevelt has gathered for his library many books on the maritime history of the United States. He has not only accumulated the rarer volumes on the subject, but to his collection he has added early views, ship-models, contemporary manuscripts and autographs. His bookplate is a small engraved plate, with an anchor and four stars.

The President, with his real flair for collecting, should devote some of his energies to gathering the precious memorials of our country's history, so that they can be available for the use of scholars forever. No one can do it better. There are thousands of printed books, documents and autograph letters in private possession that should be secured for the Library of Congress or the new department of National Archives in Washington. It is a noble project and it is to be hoped that the President will give his personal attention to a matter that must be as dear to him as it is to the entire American public.

No one should look upon a book from the libraries of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or Abraham Lincoln without a thrill. The volumes from the Presidents' libraries mean much more to the student than their title-pages indicate. To the biographer they are of inestimable value. It is a pity that the great institutions of the United States do not contain more books that at one time belonged to our Presidents, for it is possible to obtain volumes from the private libraries of all of them.

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