Catalog of the Peal Exhibition

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CATALOG
of an
EXHIBITION
from the
W. HUGH PEAL COLLECTION

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TEXT BY
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with assistance by
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The text that follows comprises a *catalogue raisonné* of an exhibition of over two hundred items chosen from the W. Hugh Peal Collection and mounted in the Gallery and Reading Room of the Department of Special Collections at the University of Kentucky in October of 1982. Although the collection, as well as the exhibition itself, contains materials of the highest interest in a variety of fields, the catalog is limited in scope to our showing of English and American literature and to the arts of the book. In the field of literature, particular emphasis is devoted to the early English Romantics, the center of Mr. Peal’s interest and the theme of the seminar which marks the dedication of the Peal Collection to scholarly use. Although the larger survey of English and American writers contains many exciting high spots which will find ready recognition among all who have some knowledge of literary history, the cabinets containing materials relating to Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and Southey will suggest the richness and depth of the books and manuscripts assembled with great care by a thoughtful collector over a period of many years.

The intent of the catalog is to interpret the exhibition to the interested viewer by sketching in bold strokes the significance of the authors selected and stating concisely the importance of the items shown. It can be assumed that where not otherwise indicated all of the books are first editions. When this is not the case, the significance of the copy, whether for its binding, illustrations, or previous ownership, will be outlined.

Where possible, special attention has been paid to the provenance of the items listed. This is a tribute to the achievement of those owners and collectors of the past who have cared for and passed down valuable cultural artifacts of unusual bibliophilic appeal and rare scholarly significance. Though each is now “the Peal copy,” there is nevertheless a certain fascination in knowing that an item on view may once have belonged to the Augustan poet Alexander Pope, the automotive manufacturer Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., or to the first great American collector of Keats and Shelley.

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manuscripts, Frank Brewer Bemis. In addition, reference is made to the Accession List of the Library of W. Hugh Peal, an invaluable record maintained by the collector, which methodically documents by accession number the entry of over 14,000 items into his collection, with a brief statement of the features and source of each.

As indicated above, the catalog is a guide for the interested viewer and not a dissertation for the bibliographical specialist. No attempt has been made to categorize trade binding colors according to the ISCC-NBS color chart, to enumerate cancellanda, to transcribe watermarks, or to construct complex collations. (It is hoped, however, that scholars will take such an interest in the future.) For the sake of convenience, however, we have adopted several common abbreviations to describe manuscripts. These are: A.L.s. for “autograph letter, signed”; A.N.s. for “autograph note, signed”; L.s. for “letter, signed” (the body written by another); and T.L.s. for “typed letter, signed.”

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