

The
ANNMARY BROWN
MEMORIAL

A Descriptive Essay by
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TRUSTEES OF THE ANNMARY BROWN MEMORIAL
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NOTE

THE following description of the Annmary Brown Memorial, its founding, and its contents has been written for those who, having known Brigadier General Rush C. Hawkins during his many years as a collector, are interested in the final housing of his treasures; and for those who, having been to the Memorial itself, seek to understand its meaning or wish to keep this brief pen-picture as a memento of their visit.

THE ANNMARY BROWN MEMORIAL

THE Annmary Brown Memorial stands as an expression of an outspoken yet sensitive idealism—an idealism which the founder again expressed in the fearless lines of his "Credo":

I believe in unconditional honesty,
The power and practice of truth,
The influence of noble aspirations,
And love of the beautiful.

To General Hawkins, the "love of the beautiful" had twofold significance. It meant appreciation of whatever of beauty had been created by the hands or in the minds of man. It stood for him as the just acknowledgment of beauty in thought and act, as exemplified in the character of his wife. In her honor, the building was erected in Providence on the site of her childhood home. That its art treasures might perpetuate her memory, the founder gave to the Memorial her maiden name—Annmary Brown.

On four days a week the figures of Art and Learning, on the bronze doors which guard the entrance, stand graciously aside. On these days, Tuesday through Friday, those who will may enter. Those who come seem always to enter reverently—no matter whether they are lovers of the beautiful, scholars who come as pilgrims to study the first books printed with movable type, or connoisseurs in

art. Across the threshold there is a restful quality which breathes of cheeriness and peace.

Even in midwinter when a blanket of snow darkens the skylights overhead, the fire burns the brighter on the hearth. A sidelight from the glass doors of the vestibule catches on the burnished goldleaf of the initial letters and illuminated borders in the gallery of early printed books. Some ray will touch the lattice-work and tracery of the gold-bronze door which at the far end of the building leads into the mausoleum where General and Mrs. Hawkins lie entombed. A soft light reflecting along the floor shines up upon the Virgin's face in Matthei's "Assumption," which hangs above the door, until the picture—with its mingled rose tints, ochre, and old blue—seems to send forth a radiance of its own. On such a day it may be twilight in the galleries; but it is a twilight of peace and rest, never one of gloom.

Like its exterior, the building itself is without embellishment save for the books and pictures with which its walls are lined. The entrance hall, its walls a neutral green, is hung with water-colors and etchings which, as with the majority of the pictures in the Memorial, were formerly in General and Mrs. Hawkins' home. At the left is the curator's study with its reference books and cheery fire; at the right, the so-called "Relic Room"; and, opposite the main entrance, an open doorway leads into the galleries, the first of which contains the early printed books.

In spite of the omission of the founder's name from the title of the Memorial, these fifteenth-century books still

continue to be thought of by the booklovers of two continents as the Hawkins Collection. And rightly so, for the bringing together of these books—each one typical of some phase or step in the early diffusion of the art of printing—occupied the founder for over sixty years. It was the zeal and tenacity with which he kept to his task that caused him, at the time of his death in 1920, to be recognized as the dean of American book collectors.

In the tall glassed-in cases which line the walls of the first gallery, the shelves are made to slant like book rests. On them are laid these "first books," opened that their individual characteristics may be studied with ease; and an impressive display they make, their texts as clear and the linen paper almost as immaculate as the day they came from the press. During over four hundred years either they have received loving care at the hands of their successive owners, or else they must have lain in quiet corners undisturbed, waiting until they came into their own. Venerable as they are, they show few marks of age as they rest content in the light and pure air of their final home.

In scope the collection is highly specialized. It is confined to that epoch-making period between 1460 and 1500 when, after the capture of Mainz and the exodus of the townspeople and first printers, the knowledge of the art of printing with movable metal type gradually spread throughout Western Europe. Since the books at the Memorial are grouped according to the countries and towns in which they were printed, it is possible by walking about the gallery to study and compare the earliest books issued

from the presses first established in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, the Low Countries, Austria, Spain, England, Denmark, and Portugal.

In the catalogue of the collection which was made by Mr. Pollard, the former Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, a table of comparative figures shows that in a representative sense the present collection ranks surprisingly close to that at the British Museum.

It is of course frequently true that the British Museum has many books from a press while this collection has but one. Yet in a purely representative sense this collection is remarkably complete. The task which General Hawkins set himself was to secure a typical specimen from each press established before 1500, if possible the first book issued. This collection is therefore the skeleton of the period and so complete a skeleton that from it the scholar may study and compare the various forms of type-design and the methods of book-building and of book illustration which prevailed during the first fifty years after the invention of printing. Because of the representative quality of the collection, and Mr. Pollard's vast knowledge of the subject, the catalogue of the collection prepared by Mr. Pollard in 1910 is in reality a comprehensive history of this early period of printing. Even when the great Catalogue of incunabula in the British Museum is completed and the huge volumes of the forthcoming *Gesamtkatalog* have been published, it is probable that Mr. Pollard's Catalogue of the Memorial's collection will continue to rank as one of the most authoritative single books upon the subject.

One cannot resist telling the story of the Providence man who, some years ago, while at the British Museum asked if he might see the first book with a dated title-page. He was told that but two copies were on record: one in Cologne, the other in the United States. "Where is the one in America?" he asked, and the reply was, "In Providence." In some instances it is not charity but research which should begin at home.

And another instance of the collection's strength—one of our trustees drove out from Rome last year toward the monastery at Subiaco and then, after considerable mountain climbing and as a fitting climax to the trip, he was shown a copy of the first dated Italian book extant. He might well have been spared the climb, for at home he might have driven from his office to the Memorial, and there have seen an excellent specimen of the same edition.

It is astonishing that in the sixty-odd years of the founder's collecting so many gems of early printing could have been brought together by a single individual. He knew precisely what he wanted and, happily, competitors were few—at least so far as American collectors were concerned. It gives one a feeling of pleasure, childlike perhaps but very human, to find one of the Memorial's choice volumes recorded on the first page of the proof of the forthcoming *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, and among the seven known copies of the first *Abbreuiamentum Statutorum*.

This great *Gesamtkatalog*, or *Complete Catalogue of Early Printed Books*, whose first volume is promised for this year,

aims to describe minutely all of the fifteenth-century books now extant, a total of approximately 35,000 distinct works or editions. And it is to be published, volume by volume, in Germany under the auspices of the Kommission für den Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke. This German commission began its work in 1904, and it is achieving its mighty purpose through the co-operation of eminent librarians and the learned societies of England, Belgium, Holland, Italy, France, Switzerland, Galicia, Dalmatia, Russia, Poland, Scandinavia, and the United States. In addition to being a detailed catalogue of all the early printed books on record, the *Gesamtkatalog* is a census of copies to the extent that in instances where less than ten copies are known the location of all is specified. For books less rare, the *Gesamtkatalog* prefers to locate only a few of the representative copies. By appointment of the Bibliographical Society of America, during the next few years the work of the Memorial will be closely related to this forthcoming catalogue.

The full location-list of early printed books in American libraries or collections, so far as they were known nearly a decade ago, was compiled by a committee appointed by the Bibliographical Society of America; and the data, entitled *Census of Fifteenth-Century Books Owned in America*, was published by the New York Public Library in 1918-19. So accurately had the work been done, and so invaluable did the *Census* prove itself to be to all students of early printing, that it went out of print almost immediately. Meanwhile, the constantly growing interest in this subject

has greatly stimulated collecting of fifteenth-century books in America; there are new titles to be recorded week by week. A *Second Census* is, therefore, in process of compilation. It is probable that this will be published in sections following each of the forthcoming volumes of the *Gesamtkatalog*, and so similar to it in arrangement that the *Gesamtkatalog* and the *Second Census of Fifteenth-Century Books Owned in America* may be used to supplement one another.

All of the records made by Dr. Winship, the chairman and editor of the first census committee, have since been transferred to the Annmary Brown Memorial; and data for the *Second Census* is now being secured under the direction of the Memorial's curator as editor. Meanwhile, until this *Second Census* shall have been published, the Memorial stands as headquarters for the nation regarding the location of fifteenth-century books to be found in America, and it stands as the clearing-house or foreign agency through which information regarding American-owned copies may be sent forward to the *Gesamtkatalog*.

Aside from their literary, historic, and typographic interest, the majority of the Memorial's copies of these "first books" have an artistic value which in itself is quite as important as the technical points which distinguish them as unique copies, first editions, or the variant issues dear to the heart of a bibliophile. As Henry Bradshaw once wrote, the invention of printing was "a contribution to the history of art." In the books of Germany for instance—whether massive volumes like some of Schoeffer's and Mentelin's,

or a small octavo like the Thomas à Kempis, the first of only two books known to have been printed at Lüneburg during the fifteenth century—there is in the type and texture of the paper a quality noticeably strong and bold. The same may be said, in lesser degree, of the books of Switzerland, the Low Countries, and Spain, although each country's output has marked characteristics of its own. The books of France exhibit grace. A small quarto, a treatise on the study of law, issued at Brünn in 1488 is of surpassing beauty. The choicest of the Italian books are veritable works of art. In beauty of type and in the arrangement of the type upon the printed page, few books if any have ever surpassed Jenson's *Eusebius*, or the Strabo geography printed at Rome in 1469 by Italy's first printers. In Jenson's *Diomedes* the type fairly sings.

The art of printing at its birth set the standard for the ages. Thus, upon the laws established by these early books are based the artistic and the typographical points which prevail in the finely printed books of today. In fact, no greater tribute could possibly be paid the originators of modern book-making, than a display such as this of the masterpieces which they themselves produced.

Many of these early books are adorned with woodcuts. Grouped together as they are, they form a visible history of early illustration—from the crude outline drawings engraved with the intention of subsequent tinting by hand to the books at the end of the century in which by the effective use of solid black, or by the introduction of cross-hatching in the shadows and backgrounds, black and white

was used as a decorative scheme in itself. A surprising number of these early printed books are still in their original bindings, oak boards covered with tooled pigskin or with vellum now taut with age, and in some instances with bosses and clasps still intact.

Across the threshold, in the galleries of paintings, a canvas by Edwin Lord Weeks first catches the attention. It is of a caravan coming directly toward you under a brilliant Eastern sky. The painting is so hung that the light falls upon it at exactly the angle at which the sun beats down upon the desert. On a hot July afternoon, the burning sand seems to add intensity to the heat of the summer day; the sharp black shadows following close at the heels of the marching men seem to be cast by the sun itself; and the effect of the whole is so suggestive that for a moment one half expects to hear the "onch, onch, onch" of the approaching camels.

Another painting by the same artist, an East Indian scene, a huge canvas on the southern wall, has the alluring habit of looking different at different times—"The Golden Temple" it is called. It represents the marble mosaic terrace at Amritsar, dotted here and there with natives. The reflection of the temple shines across the surface of an intervening pool until its golden light touches the pavement beside the foremost *Sikh*. At times it is a mid-day scene—the temple shines resplendent; the sky assumes an oppressive depth; the natives squat upon their rugs, listless with the heat. Under other atmospheres, the scene

changes to cool twilight—the natives meditate, refreshed, and the evening dew seems to settle on the flower-vendor's basket. Changeful as it is, one mood is quite as rich in beauty as the other; and, in either mood, in the personalities of the *Sikh* worshipers, one can see the quiet strength, the magnetic, controlled power characteristic of India's people. The foreground is in deep shadow. As from a shielded vantage point, one looks from the terrace across the pool, to the campanile and white, sunlit walls of the buildings that adjoin the gleaming temple.

On the north wall there hangs an allegory, a large canvas by Plauzeau, which bears the motto: "Devoured by birds of prey, her children driven from their country—Poland remains immortal." A train of exiles winds across a barren plain as far as the eye can see. The able-bodied trudge on foot. Aged peasants and the children are drawn along in lumbering wagons. The horizon is shrouded in dark clouds, ominous of the future. In the foreground, the procession passes behind a shaft which is evidently a wayside shrine. At its base is bound a Polish maiden, symbolic of her country. At her feet is the shadow of the Cross. A sentinel, his bayonet and spiked helmet gleaming, stands guard that those who pass may do naught to help her. Three eagles—symbolic of her three neighboring countries—circle close and closer overhead; one is already burying his talons in the flesh of her bare arm. It is not a pleasant picture; once it has been seen it is not easily forgotten. And a minor detail, though not too slight to mention, is the figure of a dog at the far end of the procession—his tail

between his legs, every line of his body drooping, his head bowed low, a character study in himself.

Quite different are the other pictures in this gallery. Three French river landscapes, by Damoye, Dufour, and Joubert, are painted in the Barbizon tradition. A distant valley seen through the sycamores, by Daniel Garber, is of the decorative school of painting, as also are two studies by Gari Melchers—"The Fairy Story" and "La Brabançonne." In Lamorna Birch's "Cornwall," great wind-swept clouds cast their shadows over the English downs.

An interior by Myron Barlow represents a rather barren room with a flat, plastered wall. In the center a young woman in violet bodice and rose-colored cap stands reading, leaning over on a table, lost to the world in her book. The most interesting feature, interesting both to artist and layman, is the Paisley cover which envelops the table in folds of softly mingled red and blue over which the light reflected from the stucco wall casts an amethyst sheen.

One more of the modern paintings should perhaps be mentioned—a Nantucket interior by Eastman Johnson. The local squire is offering a glass of wine to a neighbor. The two stand before an old Chippendale sideboard on which is a mahogany case, velvet lined in peacock blue and containing a half-dozen flasks. A quaint old mirror, mahogany and gilt, hangs above. Three peacock feathers are tucked in at the back. Under the sideboard is a tapestry-covered cricket minus several tacks. A toby in Continental hat and costume looks down contentedly from the top of a high corner-cupboard.

This picture hangs near the left of the doorway which opens into the third gallery and, because its furnishings represent a period of the past, it may serve as an introduction to the early paintings in the gallery beyond. In this are hung paintings by Gilbert Stuart, Benjamin West, and Frothingham; a Nasmyth and a Van Stry flooded with golden light; a Kauffmann; a Coello; an Ibbetson with clear, silver tones of twilight; a Hobbema in which dark trees are silhouetted against a bank of swiftly moving, billowy clouds; and so on, through various schools of painting, down through the ages to a "Holy Family" by Andrea del Sarto.

The central object in this third gallery is the gold-bronze door leading into the mausoleum. It is in two panels, an upper and a lower, and the whole is surrounded by a broad, flat molding inclosed in an outer line of tracery like the dentelle border of a book. The upper panel is open lattice-work; the lower, a solid panel on which in low relief are sketched sprays of roses designed and subsequently cast under the direction of the founder. From whatever angle it is viewed, the door in its Sienna marble setting glows like a topaz.

There is something almost churchly in the appearance of this gallery. The soft golden brightness of the door is enhanced by contrast with the paintings, seasoned as they are and enriched in color by the passing of the centuries; and they have been hung with care—not only with regard to light and size but so that the color which predominates in each may blend with those around it.

On the southern wall, a large canvas represents a scene upon the Grand Canal. At the right of the canal is a compact line of buildings. The Venetian Custom-House and numerous churches border it at the left. Sailboats crowd close to the Custom-House steps, and gondolas glide here and there. Viewed from the distance, the details as in reality are lost in general masses. Viewed near at hand, as is typical in the work of Canaletto and his school, the picture is rich in detail. Each balcony and gondola has its occupants. The green blue surface of the canal is a mass of ripples. Flags are waving at the masts. Pennants flutter from the windows, and every chimney pot and gondola is painted in perspective as far away as the eye can see.

Across the room is a portrait of a British nobleman, robed in scarlet and old gold, with powdered hair, who stands against a background of dark trees and a touch of orange sky. This was traditionally known as a portrait by Copley of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham. Critics agree that it is not of Pitt, and they have questioned it as being by Copley. If by Copley, it is of his finest period. Raeburn has been suggested as the artist, and Mr. C. H. Collins Baker, of the National Gallery, London, maintains in his Catalogue of the Memorial's paintings that the portrait is "clearly influenced by Reynolds, and is nearer Hoppner than Copley." Fortunately the mystery which surrounds the picture detracts nothing from its charm.

The most conspicuous among the portraits is perhaps Lawrence's "Countess of Waldegrave," a tall figure in ivory satin gown and rose-colored bodice, with a rose cloak

half drawn across her shoulders. Sir William Beechey's portrait of a red-coated British officer is in truth a "speaking likeness"—obviously his was a word of command, not untouched with humor. In the portrait of a Dutch maiden, and in Antonio Moro's portrait of a woman in a gown of brocaded velvet and lace, the artists have given infinite care to the details of dress and finery. A tiny picture, not a foot square, is by Adriaen van Ostade, a study of an aged musician in a bottle-green coat, with a Robin Hood feather tucked in his hat.

Naturally the visitors who come to the Memorial—and there have been well over fifty thousand—differ much in taste and understanding. Yet of whatever type or culture they may be, each seems to find some point of interest, even to the little girl who called the door of the mausoleum the "Golden Gate."

Many of our visitors are thoroughgoing bookmen. Others are drawn by various historic interests. Those who come to see the paintings range all the way from connoisseurs—such as Dr. A. Bredius, director of the Mauritshuis at The Hague, and an eminent authority on the art of the Low Countries who, although he came to the Memorial as a guest, gave opinions on the Hobbema landscape and various Dutch paintings in the gallery—to the quaint village carpenter from the state of Maine who, after gazing silently at the pictures, chanced to look down at the floor. He saw the slight impressions of many heel-marks and immediately he became a hound upon the trail. With almost the precision of an Indian, every thought concen-

trated on the task, he followed out the all but imperceptible path made by many feet. He wanted to find out, so he smilingly explained, which pictures had been most admired by the public. Finally, in the light of his "expert knowledge," this staunch old Yankee gave the palm to Rubens and honorary mention to Andrea del Sarto. Such was the vote of the people. A novel but truly very democratic way to determine the merit of pictures.

Rubens' "Holy Family," which came from the Sciarra-Colonna Gallery in Rome, is similar in its grouping to the panel in the Wallace Collection, London. Judging from slight improvements in drawing, it is the later version. Joseph, in the upper left-hand corner of the panel, is robed in dark, rich green. Both the Virgin and St. Elizabeth are draped in gray blue, one in darker tone than the other, and the Virgin wears an upper garment of brilliant red. The Christ-child is reaching out with his left hand to St. John, who sits on St. Elizabeth's knee.

In the richly colored Del Sarto (formerly in the Erle Drax, Olantigh Towers Collection), the ivory-colored folds of St. Elizabeth's scarf and headdress stand in soft relief against a somber background. The flesh tints in the figures of the Christ-child and of St. John have mellowed with age, and the bronzelike tones of the Virgin's mantle—old gold, moss green, jade, and dull old rose—blend into the deep-toned harmony. As is frequently true in Del Sarto's paintings, the figure of the Virgin is a portrait of the artist's wife, the beautiful Lucrezia del Fede.

Although devoted almost entirely to its collections of

early printed books, paintings, and manuscripts, the Memorial has also a personal side. In the doorway which joins the galleries of paintings and "first books," there are two marble busts—one a portrait of Mrs. Hawkins' grandfather, Nicholas Brown, for whom Brown University was named; the other of Mrs. Hawkins' father, Nicholas Brown, representing him in 1846 at the time he was American consul general at Rome. These are appropriately placed midway between the galleries, for both were scholarly men appreciative of books and of paintings.

On a bookcase in the curator's study is a marble head representing Mrs. Hawkins in her girlhood. Her hair is caught at the back, a curl falling over either shoulder. Her bearing suggests patrician calm and gentleness. A similar portrait represents her younger sister Carrie Mathilde who became Mme Bajnotti, but who in this portrait bust appears as a chubby little girl with a most bewitching marble smile. Family portraits hang in the study and in the relic room across the entrance hall.

In this relic room are Civil War trophies, books and manuscripts brought together as minor hobbies in collecting, heirlooms reminiscent of bygone days, and a portrait of Mrs. Hawkins in white evening dress. There are also portraits of her mother and father, and of Mme Bajnotti, whose memory was honored by her husband in the erection of the Carrie Tower on Brown University campus and the Bajnotti fountain on the terrace in front of the Union Railroad Station. It is a curious fact that two sisters, neither of whom lived in Providence after their marriage

and whose husbands never had residence here, should both have memorials in the city of their birth.

The portrait of the founder was painted by his friend, Gari Melchers, and given to the Memorial by the artist, a real portrait both in expression and in pose. General Hawkins is seated in deep thought, as if considering some problem of booklore. A vellum-bound book rests on his knee. Pinned to the lapel of his coat is the rosette of the Legion of Honor, a decoration bestowed by the French government at the time he was United States art commissioner at the Paris Exposition of 1889.

Although open to the public, the Memorial is entirely a private institution. It houses a private collection, endowed by the founder and provided with a self-perpetuating board of trustees. That it is opened each week from Tuesday through Friday is in accord with the founder's desire to share the treasures, which he and his wife had collected, with those kindred spirits who would come to the Memorial either for study or for quiet and meditation.



Rush Christopher Hawkins was born in Pomfret, Vermont, on September 14, 1831, the son of Lorenzo Dow and Maria Louise (Hutchinson) Hawkins; his death occurred October 25, 1920; in early manhood he studied law in New York City which from that time became his home; during the Civil War he served as Colonel of the Hawkins Zouaves, the 9th New York Volunteers; in 1866 by brevet he was raised to the rank of Brigadier General.

Annmary (Brown) Hawkins was born in Providence, March 9, 1837, the daughter of the Hon. Nicholas and Caroline Mathilde (Clements) Brown; the cornerstone of the Memorial erected in her honor was laid in 1905, two years after her death, and the building was opened to the public, July 2, 1907.