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THE ‘INDIA ALICE’
by Warren Weaver

To understand why the true first edition of Alice in Wonderland is so rare a book, and to understand the history of the copy here being described, it is necessary to review briefly the origin of this book.

The story of Alice was first recounted orally by Lewis Carroll (the Reverend Charles L. Dodgson, a mathematics teacher associated with Christ Church College of Cambridge University) on July 4, 1862. He told the tale, largely inventing as he went along, to the three small girls Edith, Alice, and Lorina Liddell, at that time aged six, eight, and ten. They were the daughters of Dr. H. G. Liddell, who was Dean of Christ Church.

Urged by the little girls to do so, he wrote out the story, using as a title Alice Under Ground. The manuscript of that first version has

January 1965
disappeared. Some time after, he carefully printed out by hand the same story, adding illustrations drawn by himself. This version he gave to Alice Liddell on November 26, 1864. This second manuscript version is often referred to as “the manuscript of Alice in Wonderland”; but it is in fact the manuscript of the short first version of the story, still bearing the title Alice Under Ground. This famous manuscript is now owned by the British Museum, having been presented to that institution in 1948 by a group of American friends who contributed $50,000 to make this gift possible.

Friends who saw the short version of the story urged Carroll to publish it in regular printed form, and soon he started to re-write and expand the story. To this improved version, which was nearly twice as long as the original version, Carroll gave the title Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, a name that has become so familiar that it is often shortened to Alice in Wonderland or even to Alice.

Macmillan and Company printed 2000 sets of sheets, and it was expected that these would be assembled and bound in time for the Christmas trade in the late fall of 1865—although the book bore the date 1866. The author requested that approximately fifty copies be bound in advance, so that he might present these to friends.

Then something wholly unexpected occurred! The illustrations for the printed version of Alice had been drawn by the famous artist Tenniel; and when he saw the sheets he vigorously protested that his pictures had not been well reproduced, and he insisted that the whole printing be done over again.

This was done, and a second edition was issued which bore the date 1866. Tenniel was satisfied with the new printing of his illustrations. There has been much discussion as to whether the reprinting actually resulted in improved illustrations. A picture-by-picture comparison of the 1865 and 1866 printings does in fact leave one somewhat confused. Not only are the differences slight—really unnoticeable to the average reader—but in several instances the 1865 pictures seem slightly better than the 1866 ones. The 1866 book, however, was a better printing job from other points of view. The 1865 edition had been set up from non-uniform type, and had been marred by what a printer calls “widows” — a failure to have a full line of text in the first or last line on a page. These printing imperfections were all remedied in the 1866 issue.

When it became clear that the 1865 printing would not be released, Carroll asked his friends to return to him the copies he had sent them, promising to replace these by copies of the improved printing. Having, quite understandably, no reason to guess what treasures they were giving up, most of these copies were returned. It is not possible to be completely definite about what happened. It is known that Carroll retained two copies in his own possession, both bound in vellum: for these were still in his own library when it was sold at auction after his death. It seems clear that of the (approximately) fifty copies which had been bound at Carroll’s request, twelve to fourteen were given away and not returned; for these copies, several with the original inscriptions, exist today. It is also known that Carroll, in addition to the two vellum copies, had at least 34 further copies in his possession in the fall of 1865. It seems probable that most of these were copies which he had given away but which had been returned at his request; but it is entirely possible that some of these 34 had never been given away. It is barely possible, but very unlikely in my opinion, that a few of these copies had been sold and then returned at request to be exchanged for improved copies. Carroll’s nephew, Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, who wrote a biography of Carroll in 1898, does speak of the return of copies by “purchasers”; but there is no evidence that Macmillan ever sold any copies of the 1865 edition; and it seems highly unlikely that Carroll would himself have sold any of the copies he had bound in advance specifically so that he might give them to friends.

There is a definite record in Carroll’s own hand (on an otherwise blank page of his diary) of what he did with the 34 copies referred to just above. He gave 24 of them, as follows, to children’s hospitals: Children’s Hospital, Great Ormond Street: 5 copies, Walton Convalescent Home, Surrey: 6 copies, Margate Infirmary: 6 copies, Oxford Infirmary: 4 copies, Victoria Hospital, Chelsea: 3 copies. And he gave the remaining 10 to a medical friend and to a clergyman, so that they in turn could distribute them for the use of ill children. These went to:

“Dr. Southey for distribution”: 6 copies, Rev. W. Jacobson, 9 Red Lion Square: 4 copies.

It has regularly been assumed that these “hospital copies” were read to pieces and discarded long before there was any basis for considering them special or valuable. Indeed it seems wholly unlikely that a popular book for children would survive, in such a setting, for more than ten years: and it was at least thirty years after 1865 before the book became notable enough so that worn copies would have been preserved,
rather than thrown away. The general assumption has therefore been that it was impossible that any one of these 34 hospital copies would ever come to light.

But, as the White Queen pointed out to Alice, if you practise enough you can believe as many as six impossible things before breakfast. On December 14, 1961, there was sold at auction at Hodgson's in London, a newly discovered copy of Alice. It had been bought, some ten years before that, at a small second-hand book stall in Bangalore, India.

It was purchased there by a Mr. L. C. Kent-Morgan, an Englishman who was at that time in charge of a property near Bangalore. Mr. Kent-Morgan has written to me:

"The book shop was situated in a go-down in the compound of a bungalow in Museum Road, Bangalore. It was owned by a young Indian, whose name I cannot now remember. He obviously purchased books en bloc from auction sales, for they were in heaps all over the go-down floor with little or no attempt made to display them or sort them out. I found this little shop around 1950 — I cannot put the date earlier than that — and thereafter whenever I was in Bangalore I used to go and poke around to see if I could find anything of interest. It was on one of these visits that I came across Alice, priced at 1/8 rupees (about 2½ shillings). I was in two minds about buying it on account of its rather poor condition; but the date interested me. Also we had no other copy at home and I wanted to read it again. It was not long afterwards that I found the shop no longer in existence: whether the proprietor had moved elsewhere, or whether he had given up altogether I do not know."

Some time in April, 1961, Mr. Kent-Morgan saw a paragraph in the London Telegraph which indicated that a copy of the 1865 edition of Alice was very valuable. Mr. Kent-Morgan thinks that this was a notice of sale of an 1865 Alice for $23,000; but since there was no sale at that particular time, it seems probable that he saw a story concerning the disappearance of a copy of Alice which had been insured for approximately that sum. That "disappeared" copy will come back into our story later.

Mr. Kent-Morgan, having noticed the article in the Telegraph, went to his shelves and discovered that his own copy of Alice was dated 1865!

Mr. Kent-Morgan decided that he must sell the book, and through his solicitor in London it was turned over to the auction house of Hodgson and Company of 113 Chancery Lane.

The sale on that day included 610 items, only a few of which were particularly distinguished. There were, to be sure, examples of books printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498 and 1516, and a rare Mohawk primer printed in Montreal in 1781: but there was only the one book by Lewis Carroll.

Perhaps because this auction sale was not particularly well publicized, perhaps because there was only one item of interest to Carroll collectors, the copy of Alice was knocked down for the modest price of 880 pounds. It was sold to Mr. Lew David Feldman, the proprietor of the rare book firm in New York City known as the House of El Dieff.

Not long thereafter Mr. Feldman sold this book, which I will refer to as the "India Alice", to a collector who prefers to remain anonymous. This same collector already had a particularly fine copy of the 1865 Alice, namely, the only "proof copy" in existence — one whose sheets had been rescued from the dustbin of the printing shop in Oxford by the man in charge of the press room, who then had the sheets folded and bound by a relative of his who had a shop around the corner.

It was a tradition at that time that the printer could rescue and keep for himself the first trial sheets run off the press.

It is now necessary further to interrupt the account of the India Alice in order to state the facts about the "disappeared Alice," referred to on page 4. This is a very famous copy which Lewis Carroll presented, with an inscription, to his life-long friend Thomas Vere Bayne. The copy was at that time owned by Hannah D. Rabinowitz who now lives in Sands Point, L.I., N.Y. A book fair was to be held in Stockholm early in 1961, and Mrs. Rabinowitz was asked if she would send three or four of her finest treasures for exhibition at that fair. She did so, the Thomas Vere Bayne 1865 Alice being one of four books. The other three were a copy of the first English translation of Boccaccio's Decameron, printed in 1620; a first edition of Robert Burns' poems with a manuscript leaf; and a first edition of The Faerie Queen. Alice was in distinguished company.

The Thomas Vere Bayne Alice was insured for $22,500. It arrived safely in Stockholm and was exhibited. But when it was shipped back to the owner, it disappeared, probably at Hartford, Connecticut, or somewhere between Hartford and New Haven.

The book was completely lost for approximately eighteen months. It then turned up in August, 1962, in a package addressed to a Mrs.
Peter M. Schultheiss of Camden, Connecticut, having been sent to her because her address was written on paper which had been used as preliminary wrapping of the volume.

The assumption is that the book had been stolen—probably at Hartford—by thieves who concluded that a package of that size, insured for that amount, must contain jewels. The book was not damaged by all of these adventures, but by the time it re-appeared it belonged to the insurance company, because they had paid off on the policy. Thus it was sold at the Parke-Bernet Galleries on the order of International Adjustors.

Again Mr. Lew D. Feldman appears on the scene, for he was the top bidder at $16,000.

Mr. Feldman not long after that sold the Thomas Vere Bayne copy, which is now destined to be named "The Lost Alice," to the anonymous collector mentioned earlier. Feeling that he had no business to own three copies of the 1865 Alice, this collector turned the India copy back to Mr. Feldman, giving him the right to sell it for a period of months. At that point Mr. Feldman offered the volume to me, and after some serious family discussions, I purchased it. I have certainly been known to buy rare books of which my wife did not hear until many months after the purchase; but in this case it seemed desirable to have her approval in advance. I should say that she gave it with enthusiasm.

It only remains to close up the story. For on the inside of the front cover of this book there is written (partly scratched over but still legible) "Metropolitan / Convalescent / Institution / Children's Branch / August 1866."

In other words, this is a "Hospital Alice," come to light after nearly 100 years. The name "Alice Cousins" is written on the reverse of the frontispiece; and it seems entirely possible that a little English girl by that name was ill in that convalescent institution some time soon after August, 1866. Her father might have been a civil servant assigned to India, or he might have been a British merchant located in that country. One is bound to suppose that when the little girl left the hospital she took the book with her by mistake, or that she was part-way through and was encouraged to take it with her, or even that she took it off intentionally but without permission. In any event it got to South India.

I have discovered that the Metropolitan Convalescent Institution Children's Branch is an old foundation, to use that word in its British sense. A few years ago it changed its name from "Convalescent Institution" to "Convalescent Home." It is located on Lanthorne Road, Broadstairs, Kent. I have written to the present matron, hoping that they can persuade someone to go back through their records (for no true British institution would think of destroying records) to see whether or not a child named Alice Cousins was once a patient there.

You must not expect that this volume is handsome in appearance, especially when you think of the number of monsoons it must have weathered. The back strip is somewhat worn at both the top and the bottom, and the volume is slightly shaky. Some of the leaves are stained. But fortunately it has never been touched by anyone for any sort of repair.

As far as I am aware at present, there are 16 copies of the 1865 in existence. Nine of these are permanently located in such depositories as the British Museum, the Morgan Library, the Harvard Library, the Houghton Library, etc. There are seven copies in private hands, and of these, four have been re-bound. Thus there are only three copies in private hands in the original binding.

Lewis Carroll and his alter ego, the Reverend Dodgson, wrote so very many books and pamphlets, and so much has been written about him that it is not too difficult to have a large collection of this author. But however broadly based may be a collection of Lewis Carroll, the eminence of the collection depends on its vertex—on the early editions of Alice in Wonderland. I now have, of the second edition of 1866 (which is still sometimes called the first edition) a good copy, and a second excellent copy inscribed by Carroll to Tom Taylor, the friend who first suggested to Carroll that he have Tenniel do the illustrations, and who introduced Carroll to Tenniel. Of the first edition I have both variants of the second issue (that is, the 1866 Appleton)—and now I have the first issue of the first edition, the 1865 itself.
GOETHE'S LIBRARY

by Andreas Wachsmuth
translated by Alice Taylor

UNLIKE Faust, Goethe never turned away from the “urge to know”, not even in the bitter-sweet years of his youth when he was working at his “Urfaust”. Indeed with advancing age it griped him more and more powerfully and brought especially the scientific side of his work into lavish production. But the really Faustian part of Goethe - Faustian in the sense of “every moment unsatisfied” - is his attitude to books. They never offered his spirit enough. Although they enriched his imagination with new themes and phenomena, for which his thirst was insatiable, nevertheless they seldom contributed enough to his “objective thinking”. A book at best inspired him to ask those questions to which it gave no answer.

To so creative a man books are a help and an inspiration, not vessels of final revelation. He uses them as stepping-stones. To this sort of reader books are only transit-stations on the road of his own development. Whoever looks at books from this standpoint will be strongly drawn to them and then again led away from them. Their significance pales before the lust for creation which seizes and fills their reader. He will not hunger to possess many books, as Goethe hungered to increase his other collections. There is one other thing. In “Dichtung und Wahrheit” Goethe declared his “basic belief” that in everything, but more especially in the written word, what mattered was “the inner sense, the direction of the work”. This “pristine inwardness” was potent, “indestructible”, proof against time. As far back as his Italian journey he strove for this “abstract enjoyment”, while looking at works of art, trying to absorb “only the artist’s thought, the first execution, the life of the first time when the work was coming into being”.

A man to whom the exterior of a book is so unimportant as it was to Goethe will not care whether he possesses it in the first edition, the revised version or the reprint. Bibliophiles cannot claim Goethe as one of their number. He had a good eye for the appearance of a book, however, especially for the illustrations, and to him it was a prerequisite that a book be bound. When the later editions of his own works were being produced he took pains to see that they had a dignified “body”.

But luxury and show he felt to be superfluous and deterrent. The only thing which reconciled him to the splendour of the French edition of “Faust” was that Delacroix’s drawings completely embodied the “original gloom” of the poetry.

Goethe’s way of keeping his books cannot be regarded as fortuitous either. The picture he has handed down to us in “Dichtung und Wahrheit” of his father’s study where “books bound in calf and half calf adorned the walls” is not repeated in his own. To Goethe such a sight in his study would probably, like comfortable, tasteful furniture and elegant household utensils, have proved a hindrance to creative work. This sort of comfort, he said to Eckermann, is for “people who have no thoughts and do not want to have any”. (25 March 1831.) In this context Goethe seems to have extended his asceticism even to the use of names, for his work-room is called quite impersonally “the large parlour” and his library “the big bed-room”. He slept in “the little bed-room” and his manservant’s room was “the small parlour”. The everyday words “parlour” and “bed-room” designate these rooms in his diary.

The library, which originally had a door direct into the work-room and later was separated from it by a short corridor, was even barer and more severe than the work-room itself. Here were no bookish treasures to delight the eye, no splendid bindings on show. Everything which was here was here to be within reach when needed. The unadorned bookcases, reaching to the ceiling with their 125 differently-sized shelves and interrupted at the door by a narrow lectern and at the window by a wide one, offered no invitation to linger and meditate, nor did the sparse daylight from the garden window which had to illuminate a room tapering towards the back and measuring over 29 feet in depth and almost ten along its rear wall.

Nor had this book-room ever to receive callers. Its job was emphatically not to demonstrate to the public that it had been filled with books by the indefatigable thirst for knowledge of a great intellect. When Goethe was an old man many books were presented to him. He kept only a few and handed the rest over to the ducal library, for he had no room to set up any more book-cases. But we see from his diaries that he went on buying books for the library with the help of “monthly book advertisements” right to the end of his life. For instance on 14th October 1828 he discussed with Riemer “the list of the most urgently-needed books to be ordered”. Even on 1st February 1831 we hear of the “monthly addition of books and illus-
trations to the library".

All his life Goethe was a mighty reader. It would be a great under-
estimate to suppose that most of his reading was confined to his own
library. From the Weimar ducal library alone he borrowed 2,276
books, he used the Jena libraries quite a lot and even borrowed books
from further afield. Lovers of statistics, seeking to express everything
in terms of their own science, have worked out that Goethe daily
read on an average one octavo volume of medium thickness. In spite
of this astonishing feat he was neither a regular nor a systematic
reader. Goethe described his relation to books as a "desultory" spas-
modic one. Not till the final decades of his life did his reading habits
become more or less regular. He used then to read in the early afternoon
and late evening. Only on very occasional days does he mention
reading as his chief occupation.

Apart from official and social commitments Goethe's inner relation-
ship to books was regulated by what he was working at and what he
was anxious to find out. Well before his Italian journey started
Goethe's "thirst to see these things with my own eyes" was so great
that he no longer enjoyed reading "any Latin author" (to Frau von
Stein, 19th October 1786). Later, when he had seen the reality and his
longing was partly satisfied, he wrote to her from Rome: "Everything
depends on the first sure sight . . . and reading and tradition do not
give one a sure sight. Now, however, I am glad to read and bear
and collect what has any bearing on the subject, for I can now form an
opinion, I can judge." (29th December 1786.) This tells us a lot about
the place taken by books in Goethe's spiritual life. It is true not only
of this one episode.

When Goethe was a very old man he seldom left his work-room
except for meals and almost daily walks. In letters he spoke of his
silent monastic garden room and compared himself to "Merlin in his
shining tomb" (to Zelter, 14th December 1830). Books now became
an important place in Goethe's reading. With some interruptions they lasted from
12th June 1830 to a week before his death. In course of time he
borrowed from the ducal library every one of the ten volumes of
J. F. L. Kaltwasser's translation. On many evenings from October 1831
onwards his daughter-in-law Ottilie would read him one of the
"Lives", the last occasion being 14th March 1832, when the diary
notes "Night, Ottilie, Plutarch". Thus right to the end of his life he
surrounded himself with the destinies and personalities of outstanding
men, in this way no doubt appeasing that longing of which he said,
"after the sun set, leaving me in a state of depression as at the onset of old age" he had chosen the wrong sort
of book (diary 14th December 1831).

During the last years of his life Plutarch's "Lives" held an important
place in Goethe's reading. With some interruptions they lasted from
12th June 1830 to a week before his death. In course of time he
borrowed from the ducal library every one of the ten volumes of
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of book (diary 14th December 1831).

For the final fifteen years of his life Goethe's secretary Theodor
Kräuter had charge of his library. On 2nd October 1817 the diary notes
"Kräuter tidied the library". After a mention of "newly-arrived
books" in 1819 "Kräuter went on arranging the library" (18–19 March).
BOOKBINDING WITH HUMAN SKIN

by Rigby Graham

The skin of almost every variety of living animal has at one time or another been used to cover a book - from sheep, goats and seals at one end of the scale to dogs, snakes and elephants at the other. Perhaps the most unusual material and certainly the most gruesome is human skin. Tales relating to its preparation and use are many and varied, and naturally of these some are most likely apocryphal. Though many of the pedigrees of books said to be bound in human skin are not altogether authentic, and perhaps not all the books claimed in fact so bound, there are certainly a number covered in, or inlaid with, the integument of “homo sapiens”.

Many a collector, having paid a considerable sum for a specimen, is loath to have it subjected to scientific examination lest it be proved not genuine. He prefers to believe what he has been told rather than have his doubts confirmed. It is certain however that at different times in the past a premium has been put on human leather, and today when the practice of tanning human skin is fast diminishing, the desire among certain bibliomaniacs to own a book so bound remains as insatiable as ever. The macabre often attracts; many of the most gentle people relish reading about a terrible murder, and there is, in a large number of us, a deep-rooted interest in death and dead bodies - particularly when they are not too close to us and we are not personally involved.

In teaching bookbinding I have found that the mere mention of human skin aroused such curiosity and brought forward so many questions often from the meekest and usually least interested of students. It was in order to have a stock of facts upon which to draw relevant answers that I collected and compiled what I could on the binding of books in human skin. Others have written more authoritatively than I and perhaps with first-hand experience of the subject which I confess I lack.

Depending on the treatment to which it is subjected skin, human or otherwise, can, if treated with lime and scraped, become parchment or, if tanned, become leather. In the case of parchment, the skin would be steeped in a lime pit for three or four weeks until the reaction of the alkali upon the membrane suspended decomposition and the skin became purified and softer.

If tanned, become leather. The skin then would then be whitish, cream or pale grey in colour, firm and translucent. In the case of leather depending on the tanning, the human skin thickens and becomes soft and pliable. It is saturated in a strong solution of alum, Roman vitriol and common salt, dried then dressed. The bark of oak, pine, fir, alder, willow, spruce or elm have been used frequently in tanning as also have hemlock and sumach. It can of course be stained or dyed almost any colour and would in the normal state of things, and to the untutored eye be indistinguishable from pig or goat. It takes polish exceptionally well. Sometimes it has been tawed, that is saturated with salts of iron or chromium and alum. The skin then becomes white and supple. Tawed leather from any animal (often known as Hungarian leather) is on the whole not as durable as tanned leather.

The earliest recorded instance of the tanning and use of human skin occurs in Greek mythology. Marsyas, a Phrygian satyr, found the flute discarded by Athena because the playing of it distorted her features. He immediately challenged Apollo to a musical contest on condition that the victor could do as he liked with the vanquished. On losing, Marsyas was tied to a tree and flayed alive, his blood was the source of the River Marsyas and his skin after tanning was made into a football or a leather bottle - the reports conflict.

The bodies of criminals and malefactors were often used in dissection and for the instruction and training of medical students. One particularly appropriate example is in the Bristol Royal Infirmary where the skin of a youthful murderer, one John Horwood, was used to bind the records of his case. Again part of the skin was tanned by the surgeons who demonstrated dissection on Horwood’s body after the executioner had finished with it. The book, dark brown and slightly mottled, is a hefty tome 17” x 14” and two inches thick. It is in an excellent state of preservation and the elaborately stamped binding carries in addition to the appropriate device of skull and crossbones, a tooled inscription – “CUTIS VERAE JOHANNIS HORWOOD”. The binder’s modest charge for the completed job - skulls, borders and gold tooled legend was thirty shillings.

William Corder, the murderer of Maria Martin, was tried and executed in 1828 for his activities in the Red Barn. After the execution a Suffolk surgeon, Dr. George Creed, removed the skin from the
dead man's back, tanned it and subsequently persuaded a local binder to use it to bind Curtis' famous history of the trial published six years later.

George Cadmore, executed in Devon in 1830, was sentenced to be hanged and dissected for the murder of his wife. The hanging took place in the county gaol and the dissection at the local hospital. An Exeter bookseller subsequently paid a considerable sum for this Cadmore skin and used it to bind the poetical works of John Milton, published by Tegg in 1852.

Jacques Delille, born in 1738 in the Auvergne, became professor of Latin poetry and the Abbot of Saint Severin. In 1769 he published his translation of the \textit{Georgics} of Virgil, which was an immediate success and his fame spread rapidly. When he died in 1813 his body was taken to a mortuary to be embalmed. A friend and ardent admirer of his, a young law student, by the name of André Leroy, forced an entry into the mortuary and removed as best he could some pieces of the surface of Delille. These were subsequently tanned and used as inlay decoration on a copy of his famous \textit{Georgics}. Another poet, this time a Russian, was injured in a riding accident, the result of which was that his leg had to be amputated. He ordered that the separated limb should be flayed and the skin tanned and sent to a binder to cover a collection of his sonnets which were to be presented by the now one-legged poet to his inamorata.

During the Reign of Terror in France many an aristocratic body was taken wet from Madame Guillotine to the infamous tannery at Meudon, subsidised by the National Convention to the not inconsequential tune of 45,000 eighteenth-century francs. The leather thus produced was used to bind the increasingly-popular writings of Rousseau and others.

Even the famous Derôme family of binders on occasion produced bindings in aristocratic leather. A copy bound by Nicholas Derôme "le Jeune" in this material still exists - \textit{Les Opuscules Philosophiques} by Jean Baptiste Suard (1733-1817) the critic and popular journalist, and published in 1796.

It has been variously reported that women's breasts have been used in bookbinding, the nipple being given prominent place on the cover and tooled the better to enhance its decorative qualities. Fetichists and collectors of erotica have always paid high prices for books in unusual bindings and descriptions of books so produced by Isidore Liseux and others are sometimes met with, but naturally the facts are often very difficult to authenticate for few people will admit, to any but their closest friends, that they collect this sort of thing. The wealth and boredom of some aristocratic sections of continental society in the eighteenth century led to heightened sensitivity and among certain people a craving for the remote, the unique, the strange, and the unusual. This is not the place to go into detail but let it suffice to say that bibliopegy offers many sickeningly ingenious examples of books covers of human beings, produced to satisfy this craving.

In the eighteenth century in America children's shoes were made from the skins of paupers until the penalty of five years' imprisonment was legally imposed for the sale of human skins.

Perhaps the most frequently-quoted and therefore the story with the most variations is that connected with Flammarion (1842-1925). Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer and writer, so one version tells, admired and remarked upon the beautiful soft white shoulders of an aristocratic woman at a Paris reception. This woman, a French Countess, was hopelessly afflicting with tuberculosis and as frequently happens in such cases, her fragile and transient beauty was heightened by the spread of the dreaded disease. Years afterwards, in 1882, when returning late one evening to his home in the Rue Cassini after having spent many hours working in the Paris Observatoire close by, he was given a little parcel by the concierge to whom it had been delivered earlier. On gaining his room and opening the parcel he was both surprised and sickened to find a piece of human skin, and his first thought was that he had been the victim of some particularly unpleasant practical joke. But he soon saw the accompanying letter from the eminent and fashionable Dr. Ravaud which explained that the doctor had carried out the last wish of the dead countess - the beautiful and, to Flammarion, unknown lady whose shoulders he had once so much admired. She had just died and Ravaud had immediately removed the skin from her shoulders and had delivered it to Flammarion, passing on the request of the dead countess that it be used to bind the very next book by the astronomer. Flammarion himself subsequently described in a letter how he had taken the skin first to a tanner in the Rue de la Reine Blanche and then to Engel the binder who used it to cover Flammarion's copy of his next book \textit{Terres du Ciel}. The identity of the countess remains unknown: her wish of anonymity was respected and despite numerous enquiries Dr. Ravaud never revealed her name. However, many names have at various times been suggested, amongst them the most likely being either the
Countess St. Agnes or the Countess de Saint Auge.

One of the most recent examples of human binding is that described by Holbrook Jackson in his *Anatomy of Bibliomania*. In 1891, Zaehnsdorf bound for a doctor a copy of Holbein's Dance of Death. The skin, that of a woman, was tanned by Sweeting of Shaftesbury Avenue and the headbands were appropriately worked in human hair. The book itself is now in the possession of the Grolier Club of New York.

While things which happened a century or two ago are acceptable to many people, when we come nearer our own day we become revolted - the happenings are too recent for us to feel comfortable. At the Nuremberg trials immediately after the last war, Frau Ilse Koch was charged with causing the death of certain prisoners at Buchenwald because she fancied some of their tattoos for lamp shades and book covers.

That the human skin is durable and long-lasting under ideal conditions is proved by the excavation in 1950 by Professor Glob of the body to become known as Tollund man. Discovered in the course of cutting peat in a narrow bog, Tollund Mose near Aarhus in Jutland, the body was found at a depth of seven feet, the only clothing remaining being a skull cap. This Tollund gentleman, either a prisoner or a sacrificial offering, had been hanged or throttled with a leather braid which remained embedded in his neck, and had afterwards been consigned to the bog, two thousand years ago. The whole body had been tanned by the action of the peat, and apart from the superb leather which he himself had become, even the food in his stomach, a poor type of grain and seed porridge, was perfectly preserved. Burials of this type were very common around Jutland and Schleswig-Holstein, and some hundreds have been found, but there is no example of human leather so beautifully preserved as that which covered this two thousand year old Northern bog-dweller.
FOR many years I have been impressed with the artistic endeavours of the Arts and Crafts movement begun with William Morris in the 1890's, and, being a printer, I have been particularly interested in the work of the private presses (so well exemplified by the Kelmscott, Ashendene, and Doves) which have inspired many other disciples with similar ideals. I have endeavoured to keep alive, stimulate and perpetuate fine standards in printing which I regard as more essential than ever today in the automation age. I believe that the more machinery is introduced into the printing industry, the greater the need becomes to practise printing as an artistic craft, and to pursue the fine standards of craftsmanship of past printers. To this end I established the Lilac Tree Press, not simply for mercenary gain, but for the joy of the work and pleasure of achievement. I have produced very limited editions which are now becoming collectors' pieces and which can be seen in the archives of universities, cathedrals and reference libraries in this country, Italy, the Netherlands and in several American universities. At the same time I have tried to afford an opportunity for potential illustrators to practise their skill in conjunction with typography in the hope that this would offer some encouragement to them to pursue their efforts further. The varying forms of illustration used are original drawings, wood-engravings, lino-cuts, line-drawings, and lithographic prints.

I can only work on a small scale as I am a teacher of typography and therefore can only print for pleasure in my spare time but I find printing most satisfying and rewarding after a period of teaching. There is little that gives greater pleasure to a craftsman than seeing the result of his labours in print, and however efficient or deficient the results may be, they act as an incentive towards perfection, and if I can offer inspiration to others then my efforts are not in vain. I received my early training and initiation into the realms of fine printing, both book and general commercial work, at the Birmingham School of Printing, whose book productions were then known and appreciated in all parts of the world. It was while attending this school that I came into contact with Mr. Leonard Jay, who was then Head of the school of printing, and it is to him that I have been indebted for the inspiration and guidance through the years and whose exacting standards made
me realise in truth "that trifles make perfection".

I, personally, feel that poetry in print can become rather monotonous in appearance. To avoid this I have carried out a series of experiments using papers of contrasting colours for each leaf of a book, thereby giving the reader a fresh interest each time he turns over a leaf. Likewise I have used a variety of coloured inks to obtain this relief. Colours used have been taken from references made in the verses appearing below, such as red walls, golden sunset, or green fields. Sets of original drawings have also been tipped-in, again using contrasting end-papers. I have also tried printing black type with blue unit border headbands on gold paper. All these experiments have been carried out in an endeavour to make books become living things, and readers conscious that there is more to a book than just reading matter.

My books are bound in full leather of different colours. Most of my books are printed on damped hand-made paper. Sometimes I include silk doublures in my de-luxe copies. All this extra work makes my printing rather expensive to buy, but this does not deter collectors, the world over, from making requests for copies of all the work that I produce.

An Extract from Miss Kennedy’s Diary (July 1833) describing a first trip on the Railway from Manchester to Liverpool and a visit to Liverpool Docks, is the last book to be completed at the press, and An Extract is now being bound in green calf, blocked in gold. Two other books in using papers of contrasting colours for each leaf of a book, thereby making paper. Printed in two colours. Bound in full leather with gold tooling. 6 copies.

Books from the Lilac Tree Press

An Extract from Miss Kennedy’s Diary, (no. 22) 6² 9¼ ins. 16 pp. On Tosa Bütten paper; wood-engravings and linocuts. Printed in two colours. Bound in green calf with gold design. 6 copies. 4 gns each.

In the Beginning: a series of poems. (no. 23) 6² 9¼ ins. 16 pp. On hand-made paper. Printed in two colours. Bound in full leather with gold tooling. 6 copies. 4 gns each.


January 1965

REVIEWS


Mr. Heard’s book is simply a price guide for 7357 titles of out-of-print Americana which happened to be listed in the one hundred dealer catalogs for the years 1962 and 1963, from which the guide was assembled. It is a 3rd edition, but the preface notes that half the titles in the 2nd edition published in 1960 did not reappear. He also notes a general trend of fifty per cent increase for book prices of this kind of material. This book, then, is a useful guide for anyone purchasing Americana in quantity, but each edition rapidly becomes obsolete.

The items are listed alphabetically by author, followed by short title, place and date of publication, and listed price. Frequently notes about condition, binding, limited edition or autographs are included.

The Scarecrow Press aims at usefulness rather than perfection and it produces some highly serviceable library tools by its offset from typescript which might not otherwise be printed. But the format of this book will not be pleasant to printers and collectors. — H. L. Williams


The perennial mystery of the popularity of Alice all over the world is explored from a new angle by Dr. Warren Weaver who is known and honoured by all Carrollians as the doyen of Dodgson scholars and the maker of the finest private collection of Lewis Carroll items in existence today.

And not only does Dr. Weaver own a perfect copy of the 1865 Alice (besides both Appleton versions and the 1866 English reprint) but he has collected over a hundred and sixty translations into forty-two different languages.

The present book, besides containing a detailed list of these and all known translations, also tries to analyse the various ways in which translators have striven to cope with such difficulties as puns, parodies and topical allusions.

The result is an engaging and entertaining excursion into a new province of Wonderland – where we learn how the little sisters in the well were well in by means of brilliant substitute puns in Chinese and Hungarian, and how completely the pun was missed in Danish and Hebrew, and how the Dormouse in the guise of a Woodchuck (German and Polish), Hazel Mouse (Swedish), Lemur (Swahili), Marmot (Hungarian), Mole (Spanish) and a simple smuggled in Russia.

But the scholar and collector alike will turn first to the list of translations – and here Dr. Weaver has made a really notable addition to Carrollian Bibliography and earned the admiration and gratitude of all who are interested in the astonishing history of a little book for children published a century ago at his own expense by an author who feared that he would lose money over it since he could not really hope to sell as many as 4000 copies! — Roger Lancelyn Green.
RECENT PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS

A Web of Nature. A Printbook Illustrating a Principle, devised, printed and bound by Morris Cox. (42 pp. 8 1/4 x 4 1/2 inches. 50 signed and numbered copies on Japanese Hosho paper, bound in paper-covered boards with vellum spine. Slip-case with decorated sides. Price £4. Gomgogog Press, distributed by Bertram Rota Ltd, Bodley House, Vigo Street, London, W 1, England.) There are 23 single- and three double-page illustrations contriving to pin down a few of the infinite number of Nature's reticulations. All the plates are embossed and printed by offset, each in two colours; the double-spread title-page and other pages are partly embossed in blind and partly in colours. The spine is printed in black and red, and the boards, again, are embossed with a design in olive-green. No description such as this, however, can convey, the exceptional, fragile beauty of the book in all its parts and in its whole.


Ars Poetica, an ode, by Charles Richard Cammell. (7 leaves printed on handmade paper on one side only. 9 x 6 1/2 inches. 100 signed copies, sewn into paper covers, price £2 2s. Golden Head Press, 26 Abbey Road, Cambridge, England.) A formal poem, well turned, as such a subject demands. Set in Times New Roman italic, and printed by Crampton's of Cambridge.

Two blacks don't make a white, remarks about Apartheid, by Count Potocki of Montalk. (28 pp. 8 x 5 1/2 inches. Sewn into paper covers, price 3s. plus postage. Melissa Press, Lovelace’s Copse, Flush, Dorchester, Dorset, England.) Remarks may be construed in this context as the case for – a case which Count Potocki argues, as one might expect, persuasively and with vigor and invective. Interesting, rather than fine, printing. Modestly priced.

Nine gnats, by John Best and Rigby Graham. (15 pp. 8 x 4 1/2 inches. 50 copies sewn into paper covers, price 11s. including postage. Pandora Press, 48 Walton Street, Leicester, England.) Three poems by John Best, written with short lines to fit the available type, and three drawings by Rigby Graham to fit the poems. A lively piece, neatly produced.

The name of John Roberts Press is well known to collectors of fine editions and privately printed books. Their productions range from the twenty-guinea magnificence of a folio ‘Song of Songs’ to the more modest charm of ‘Twelve by Eight’, recently published by the Private Libraries Association.

Many bibliophiles cause small books to be privately printed, so to clothe some favoured item in worthy typographical dress. They may cost little more than a good Christmas card – though there is, of course, no limit at the opposite end of the scale.

Those contemplating the production of a book or booklet ‘printed for their friends’ may expect interested cooperation from John Roberts Press Ltd, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London EC1.
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