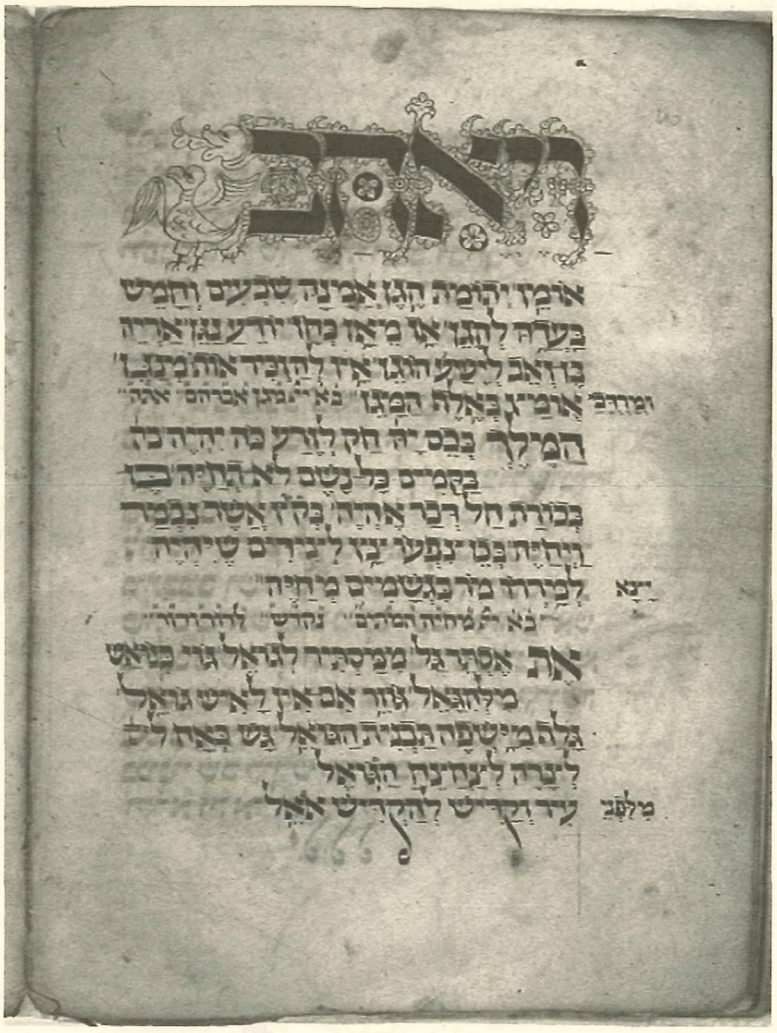
The
H·A·L·C·Y·O·N
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE THOMAS FISHER RARE BOOK LIBRARY

ISSUE No. 18, November 1996 ISSN 0840-5565

The Friedberg Collection of Rare Hebraica at the University of Toronto Library

The University of Toronto Library has recently acquired an extraordinary collection of Hebrew manuscripts and rare printed books. The collection has been donated by Mr. Albert D. Friedberg, a Toronto currency trader and book collector. The collection consists of thirty-five manuscript volumes, three dozen Genizah fragments and one hundred printed books of exceptional quality and of great scholarly interest. The collection covers nearly all areas of Jewish scholarship, including Bible and biblical exegesis, halakhah (Jewish law), liturgy and mysticism.



Mahzor (prayerbook) for special Sabbaths, Germany, 13th-14th century.

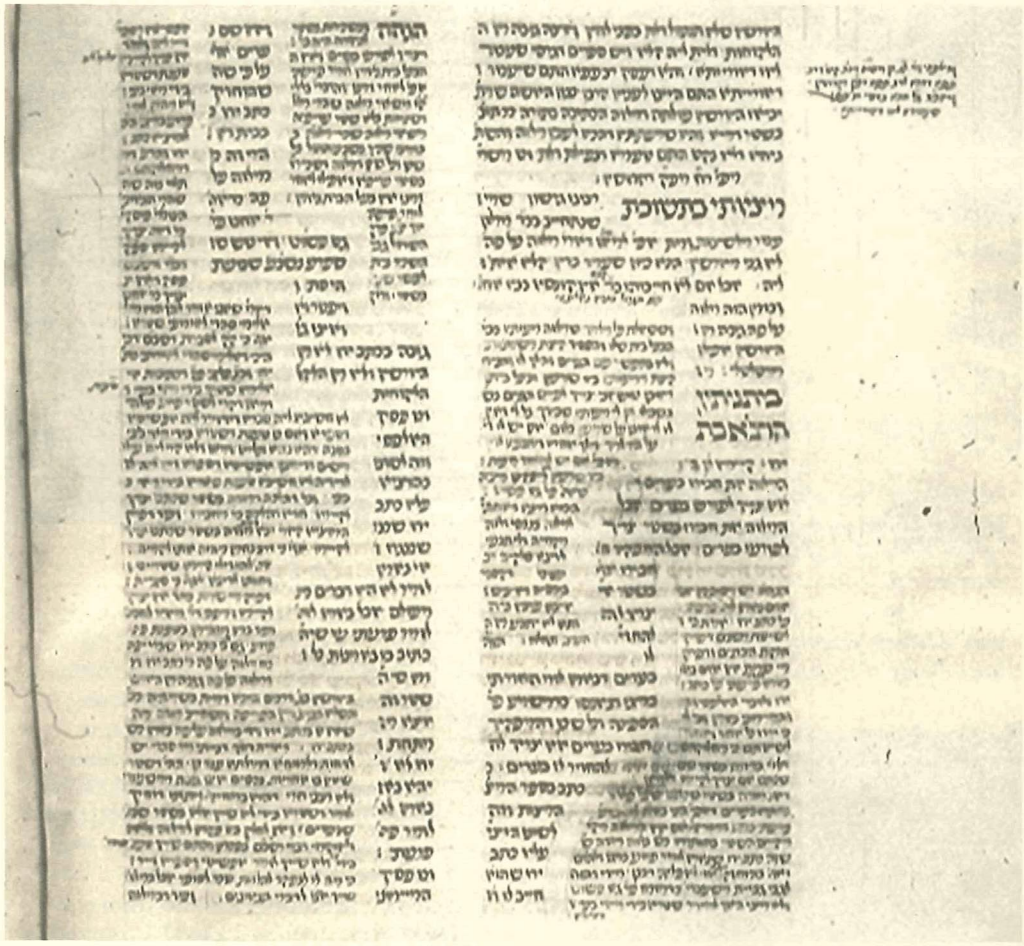
The collection of manuscripts is of especial interest. Most of the manuscripts are medieval and some are dated. Several were once part of the famous collection of David Solomon Sassoon (1880-1942). The following descriptions of some of the highlights of the collection should be considered preliminary, subject to further examination and research by experts in the field.

Bible and Biblical Exegesis

The most precious biblical manuscript in the Friedberg collection is a copy of the entire Hebrew Bible written by the scribe, Joseph ben Judah ibn Merwas (Sassoon 508). The manuscript has a colophon in which the scribe states that he completed it in Toledo in the month of Kislev 5068 (December 1307). Only two other Bibles exist with this scribe's signature. One is in the British Library. The second, which is incomplete, containing only the Former Prophets, is in private hands. The manuscript is in extremely fine condition. The biblical text is surrounded on every page by the Masorah magna and minora in interesting geometric designs. Manuscripts by Ibn Merwas had a reputation for accuracy and he is mentioned by Don Isaac Abarbanel, the famous fifteenth-century scholar and statesman, as a reliable and accurate scribe.

Another impressive biblical manuscript is a thirteenth-century copy of the Prophets which was also probably written in Spain. An unusual feature of this manuscript is the presence of two multicoloured carpet pages decorated with floral designs and containing the text of the Masorah along the lines of the designs. Similar carpet pages are found in the Damascus Keter, a biblical manuscript located in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. The latter text was written by the scribe, Menahem ben Abraham ibn Malik. It is possible that our manuscript was written by the same scribe.

Rashi (1040-1105) was the most popular biblical exegete of the Middle Ages and his popularity remains undiminished to this day. Very few of his commentaries have been critically edited and scholars



Mordecai ben Hillel, Sefer Mordekhai, Germany, 1459.

are still divided over the methods used to determine the exact text of his commentaries. Because of Rashi's popularity his commentaries were frequently copied and glossed, and subsequently glosses were incorporated into the text by later copyists. This makes the early copies of his manuscripts all the more significant for the determination of the original text. The collection contains two Rashi manuscripts of German provenance, which are amongst the oldest in existence, dating from the thirteenth century. These should be of utmost importance to students of Rashi's works. Very few Rashi manuscripts from the thirteenth century are extant. One manuscript contains most of the Torah commentary (Ex-Dt 15:7) and the other, most of the Prophets and some of the Writings (Psalms, Job) (Sassoon 1026).

Other exegetical works in the collection are a fifteenth-century copy of the commentary on Ezekiel by David Qimhi, the thirteenth-century grammarian and exegete, and *Shoresh Yishai,* a commentary on Ruth by Solomon Alkabetz (16th cent.), a famous kabbalist and poet.

Hebrew Grammar

The collection contains several items of grammatical interest, including a thirteenth-century copy of David Qimhi's *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (Book of Roots), one of the earliest copies extant. There is also a sixteen-page fragment of an anonymous commentary on Jonah ibn Janah's *Sefer ha-Riqmah,* which dates from the fourteenth century.

Halakhah

Some of the most important items in the collection are legal texts. The Mishnah and Talmud are the primary sources for the body of legal traditions called the oral law. These texts have been and remain the primary focus of the scholarly efforts of generations of Jewish students. Because of their heavy use, and also due to the ravages of historical events (on several occasions, in the Middle Ages, hundreds of codices were burnt en masse) very few texts have survived intact from the medieval period. From the period of the Dead Sea Scrolls until the Middle Ages (about 800 years) there are no surviving witnesses to these texts. The collection includes a two-leaf fragment of the Mishnah with a date. Unfortunately, part of the date is missing and this makes the dating uncertain. Experts who have examined the text have posited two possible dates for this text: 840/1 or 1040/1. If the early date is correct then this manuscript is quite possibly the earliest dated literary Hebrew text in existence. Right now this distinction is held by a Mishnah manuscript dated 916. But even if the later date turns out to be accurate, the text, which is vocalized with Babylonian vocalization (above the letters), is still of great interest to textual critics and palaeographers.

The Talmud, after the *Siddur* and Torah, was probably the most heavily used text in the Middle Ages. Besides suffering loss through heavy use, many texts, as mentioned above, were destroyed by the Church at various periods of time. The tractate Shabbat, which deals with the laws of the Sabbath, was one of the most popular texts of the Talmud, and very few copies have survived. The collection includes a manuscript, which has been dated to the early eleventh century and contains twenty-two consecutive leaves of this text in very fine condition. Such texts are very rare.

The Geonic period in Babylonia produced several halakhic codes which crystallized the state of Jewish law at the period of composition. One of these codes is the *Halakhot pesuqot* by Yehudai Gaon. The collection includes the most complete copy of this work, which was quoted extensively by medieval scholars. This manuscript, which used to belong to the Sassoon collection (Sassoon 263), has been dated to the tenth century. The manuscript, which contains 310 pages, covers the bulk of Jewish law. For an almost intact manuscript to have survived the ravages of time for over a thousand years is a remarkable occurrence.

Mordecai ben Hillel (13th cent.) was an important Ashkenazi scholar who died a martyr's death in 1298 in Nuremberg during the Rindfleisch massacre. He wrote a halakhic compendium bearing his name, *Sefer Mordekhai,* which is of enormous importance to students of Jewish law, in that it summarizes the views of the Tosafists, the halakhic scholars of Franco-Germany of the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. The collection includes a complete

manuscript of this text written in 1459, which is, in many places, a fuller text than has appeared in earlier editions of this work. The wealth of material in this manuscript still has not been utilized by scholars.

Rabbi Moses ben Jacob of Coucy was a thirteenth-century scholar and itinerant preacher. His reputation rests on his major work, the *Sefer Mitsvot gadol,* a distillation of the Oral Law, arranged in the order of the positive and negative precepts. The work was copied extensively and many manuscripts survive. The Friedberg collection includes a fourteenth-century Italian copy of this text which is of both textual and artistic interest. The text seems to represent an early recension of this work which will enable scholars to study how the author's thinking on various issues changed over the years. Aesthetically, the manuscript is beautifully produced, with scrolls, animals and faces in blue and red ink decorating the catchwords and margins. Truly, a feast for the eye.

Shibbolei ha-leqet is a thirteenth-century Italian Rabbinic code written by Zedekiah ben Abraham Anav. It is perhaps the first attempt in Italy at the codification of Jewish law. It describes Italian Jewish customs, concentrating especially on the liturgy, and also deals with Christian-Jewish economic relations. This copy seems to have been written during the life of the author, as the scribe refers to him as being among the living.

Liturgy

The Friedberg collection contains several liturgical manuscripts of great interest. There are two *mahzorim* (holiday prayer books) from early fourteenth-century Germany, one with some interesting illuminations, and another with many unpublished *piyyutim* (religious poems) which were to be said on specific holidays. The text of the standard liturgy itself is also significant since it contains variants from the text universally used today, which indicates that in the Middle Ages, local customs still dominated. Two Ashkenazi *Siddurim* from the same period are also found in this collection. One reflects the custom of Worms and has texts similar in wording to those found in the Worms Mahzor. *Siddurim* from this period and of this rite are extremely rare. The other manuscript, which was written in Italy, has an important commentary on the liturgy which awaits scholarly analysis.

Kabbalah

The crowning jewel of the Friedberg collection is a manuscript of the *Zohar,* the major work of Jewish mysticism. Attributed by tradition to the tana Simeon Bar Yohai of the second century, the *Zohar's* authorship has been assigned by modern scholarship to Moses De Leon in the late thirteenth century. Despite its pre-eminence in the field of Jewish mysticism, very few manuscripts of this work exist and it has never been edited in a critical edition. The Friedberg collection includes a copy of the *Zohar* which has been dated to the beginning of the fifteenth century. It contains the majority of the text of the *Zohar* (from Hayyei Sarah (Gn 24) until Va-ethanan (Dt 3)). There exist only two manuscripts earlier than this one and both are fragmentary. This manuscript is the fullest extant and will be indispensable for scholars editing this text and studying the history of its transmission.

An inscription on the first page of this text by one Nathan ben Judah Noah states that he acquired it for Amira. Amira is the epithet used to refer to Shabbetai Zevi, the mystical messianic pretender of the seventeenth century. It is quite possible then, that this copy of the *Zohar* was used by Shabbetai Zevi, which gives it an added historical interest.

Genizah Fragments

The collection includes several dozen fragments from the famous Cairo Genizah of a variety of texts (biblical, liturgical, halakhic, medical, literary, grammatical), some of which used to belong to the scholar, Solomon Aaron Wertheimer.

Printed Books

The collection of printed books includes several incunabula. The oldest is a copy of Solomon ibn Gabirol's *Mivhar ha-peninim* (Choice of Pearls) (Soncino: Soncino, 1484). There is also almost the entire edition of the *Hagiographa* published by Joseph Gunzenhauser in Naples (1487) and a copy of David Qimhi's grammatical work, *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (Book of Roots) (Naples: A. Gunzenhauser, 1490).

Among the sixteenth-century imprints, especially noteworthy is the 1509 Constantinople edition of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*. This edition is extremely rare and most copies in public institutions are defective. Our copy is missing only one part of the text—the Book of Judges. There are several books printed by Daniel Bomberg—a 1518 Bible, a 1547 edition of the Rabbinic Bible and a 1524 edition of *Me'ir nativ* by Isaac ben Qalonymos Nathan.

Several volumes would appear to be unique copies and have never been recorded in bibliographic sources. Included among these are: *Sefer mazalot shel Adam* (Lublin, 1557), *Seder selihot* (Venice, ca. 1617), *Sibbuv R. Petahyah* (Krakow, 1599), and Hai Gaon, *Pitron halomot* (Lublin, 1563).

An edition of the *Shulhan arukh, Yoreh de'ah* published in Venice in 1594 has very extensive marginal notes which may have been written by a student of the Maharal of Prague, one of the greatest rabbis of the sixteenth century.

The foregoing should suffice to give the reader a sense of the quality and scholarly value of this collection. The University of Toronto Library is extremely grateful to Mr. Friedberg for having chosen it as the repository for this important collection. Indeed, he has placed the entire community of Judaica scholars in his debt.

Detail from Mahzor (prayerbook) for special Sabbaths, Germany, 13th-14th century

Barry D. Walfish
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

Father and Son: Yeatsian Marginalia

The publication in 1889 of *The Wanderings of Oisin and Other Poems* enhanced W.B. Yeats's growing reputation and, as a sign of the twenty-four year-old poet's productivity and promise, gratified his father. But the son's achievement was galling, also, since it came at a time when the father's career had stalled. At fifty-one, John Butler Yeats's achievement as a painter was modest and he was descending into chronic financial dependency on his family and friends. JBY's biographer observes that as "Willy was rising to prominence... John Butler Yeats came as close to emotional breakdown as it was possible to do without going over the edge". JBY always remembered this as a time of "incessant humiliation". His son's new book had the effect of further marginalising him and it was in its margins that he asserted himself.

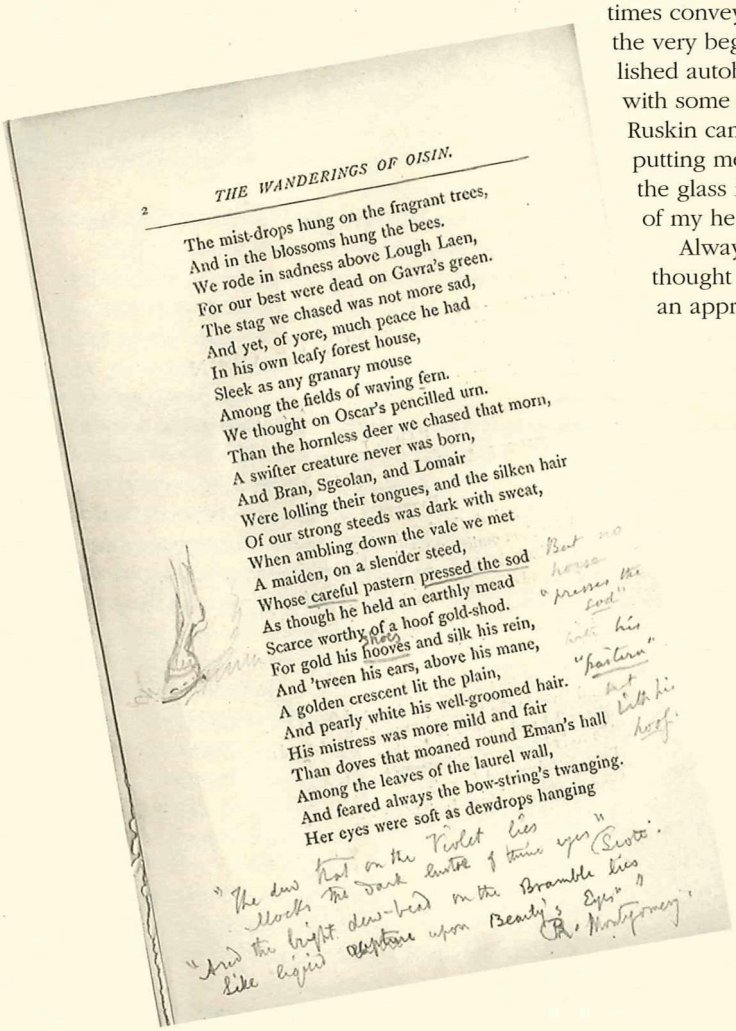
One of JBY's problems—the fundamental one according to WBY's assessment many years later—was an "infirmity of will which has prevented him from finishing his pictures and ruined his career". And WBY admitted the effect it had on his own development:

> *He even hates the sign of will in others. It used to cause quarrels between me and him, for the qualities which I thought necessary to success in art of life seemed to him "egotism" or "selfishness" or "brutality". I had to escape this family drifting, innocent and helpless, and the need for that drew me to dominating men like Henley and Morris.*

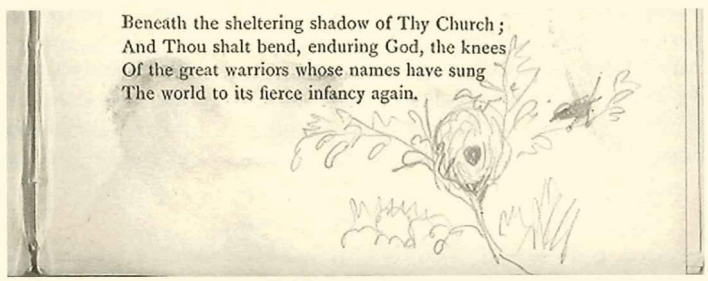
But despite the opposition and opposite career trajectories of father and son, they remained uncommonly communicative on aesthetic and philosophical matters, and JBY's views were sometimes conveyed with a marked zeal. At the very beginning of his "unpublished autobiography" WBY recounts, with some relish, how "a quarrel over Ruskin came to such a height that in putting me out of the room he broke the glass in a picture with the back of my head".

Always a sharp critic of his son's thought and work, JBY could be an approving one also, but on the occasion of the appearance of that first collection of poems the intensity of his scrutiny was especially keen. This is attested by a most notable recent acquisition by the Fisher Library—a copy of WBY's *The Wanderings of Oisin and Other Poems* with marginalia by JBY. This unique document is a revealing testimony of the father's responses to the poetry and of the poet's situation as the painter's son. JBY's notes, corrections and observations come from an animated reading, not above mockery and sarcasm. And they include four marginal sketches, two of them proffered as visual critiques of WBY's words.

JBY's most eloquent, though mute, observation is in relation to lines that refer to the "hanging mansion" of "the golden-crested wren". "Hanging" is twice underlined by JBY and his sketch at the foot of the page is conclusive — a tiny wren's "mansion" rests securely in the crotch of a branch, as nature sensibly ordains. A poet with WBY's pretensions to intimacy with the Irish countryside, its plants and creatures, should doubtless have been better informed about the nesting habits of the king of all birds. And how could one of the horse-riding gentry write that a "careful pastern pressed the sod"? JBY's reproof of WBY's anatomy-defying euphony is spelt out. (His words are

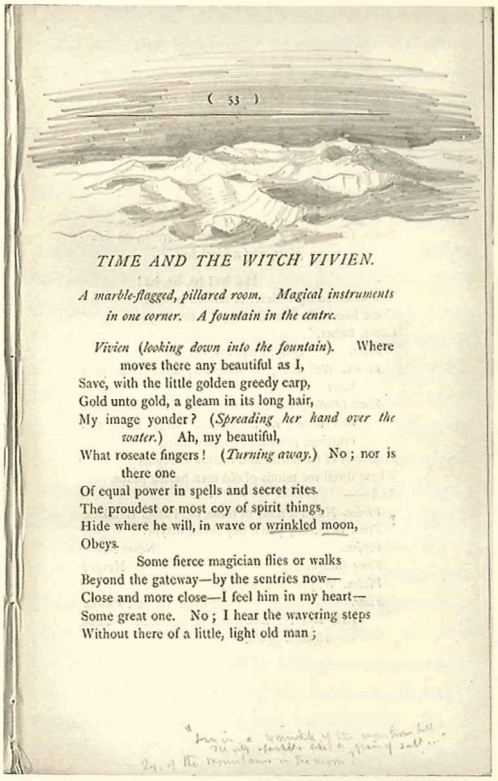

2 THE WANDERINGS OF OISIN.

The mist-drops hung on the fragrant trees,
And in the blossoms hung the bees.
We rode in sadness above Lough Laen,
For our best were dead on Gavra's green.
The stag we chased was not more sad,
And yet, of yore, much peace he had
In his own leafy forest house,
Sleek as any granary mouse
Among the fields of waving fern.
We thought on Oscar's pencilled urn.
Than the hornless deer we chased that morn,
A swifter creature never was born,
And Bran, Sgeolan, and Lomair
Were lolling their tongues, and the silken hair
Of our strong steeds was dark with sweat,
When ambling down the vale we met
A maiden, on a slender steed,
Whose careful pastern pressed the sod
As though he held an earthly mead
Scarce worthy of a hoof gold-shod.
For gold his hoofs and silk his rein,
And 'tween his ears, above his mane,
A golden crescent lit the plain,
And pearly white his well-groomed hair.
His mistress was more mild and fair
Than doves that moaned round Eman's hall
Among the leaves of the laurel wall,
And feared always the bow-string's twanging.
Her eyes were soft as dewdrops hanging


Beneath the sheltering shadow of Thy Church;
And Thou shalt bend, enduring God, the knees
Of the great warriors whose names have sung
The world to its fierce infancy again.

Left: JBY's reproof of WBY's anatomy-defying euphony...

Right: JBY's most eloquent, though mute, observation is in relation to lines that refer to the "hanging mansion" of "the golden-crested wren."



(53)

TIME AND THE WITCH VIVIEN.

A marble-flagged, pillared room. Magical instruments in one corner. A fountain in the centre.

Vivien (looking down into the fountain). Where
moves there any beautiful as I,
Save, with the little golden greedy carp,
Gold unto gold, a gleam in its long hair,
My image yonder? (*Spreading her hand over the water.*) Ah, my beautiful,
What roseate fingers! (*Turning away.*) No; nor is there one
Of equal power in spells and secret rites.
The proudest or most coy of spirit things,
Hide where he will, in wave or wrinkled moon,
Obeys.
Some fierce magician flies or walks
Beyond the gateway—by the sentries now—
Close and more close—I feel him in my heart—
Some great one. No; I hear the wavering steps
Without there of a little, light old man;

JBY's illustration of WBY's "wrinkled moon".

represented here in *The Halcyon* by bold type and all underlines are his):

But no horse "presses the sod" with his "pastern" but with his hoof.

His delicate sketch of the lower part of a horse's leg exhibits his superior precision of observation but JBY does not, by any means, condone pictorialism—quite the contrary:

O, let us have done with "the painted birds." [pictaeque volucres] Nature does not "paint,"–nor "gild" either,–nor even "silver."

The resort to Virgil (*Aeneid* IV, 525) is a low blow. JBY (like his father and his grandfather) had the advantage of being educated at Trinity College but he lacked the means (and desire) to send WBY there. And it is most unlikely that WBY registered the allusion as quickly as my colleague George Rigg did, for WBY's attempts at Latin (as at French and Irish) were ineffectual. Indeed, in his youth, even his English syntax was defective, perhaps because his father's tuition was so impatiently energetic.

WBY's **(grammar?)** (or syntax) is at issue for JBY in "How Ferencz Renyi Kept Silent," especially in the interrogation of the captive Renyi:

Hiding the rebels worm in yonder wood
Or yonder mountains. Where?

In three margins JBY busily attempts to unravel WBY's meaning:

? Hiding the rebel worms in yonder wood? Hiding the rebels (Worm!) in yonder wood ? Hiding the rebels, worm (verb, imperat: "do thou worm" – i.e. "hide like a worm") in yonder wood."

and again:

Hiding the rebels (who), worm ('who do worm'. 'worm' being a verb, 3rd person pl. pres.) in yonder wood.

and again:

"The rebels, – hiding, – (do) 'worm' in yonder wood."

Eventually, he divines a typographical mischief and guesses **rebel swarm?**, which was very nearly what had appeared in the earlier printing and was doubtless very close to what WBY intended. WBY also intended a political statement, comparing Hungarian and Irish subjugation and offering "Libations from the Hungary of the West", on which JBY's Buck Mulliganish critique is: **(Libations to the thirsty wld be more appropriate).** In the event WBY chose not to reprint this poem, which JBY thought **Good (but rather spoilt)**.

How JBY came to suspect ineptitude rather than a printer's error with that "rebels' swarm" may be gauged from his difficulties with the passage from "Jealousy", in which the stars are apostrophised, the italics are WBY's and the underlines JBY's (*see below top*).

One of JBY's marginal comments on this passage goes:

which heads? whose whirling hair? will the heads (how many?) drop an azure tear between them? And why should they (the stars at night) Sing till the hands drop an azure tear when they stop singing?

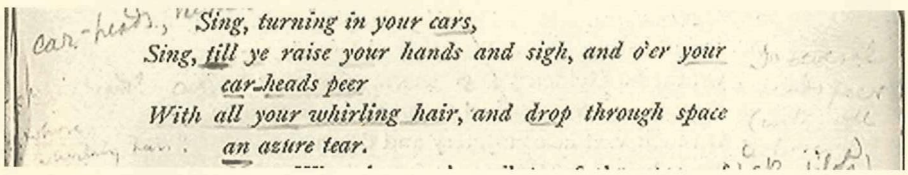
But he thought better of this, and of another comment of a similar tenor, erasing them both. (They are partially legible but it required the Art Gallery of Ontario's x-ray equipment and a close scrutiny by three of us—John O'Neill of the AGO, Emrys Evans of the Fisher Library and me—to completely decipher them.)

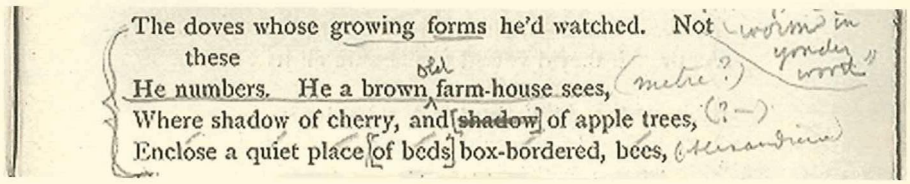
Though JBY was early convinced that WBY was a true poet, he was often irritated by his son's metrical practices, which arose from WBY's habit of "composing in a loud voice manipulating of course the quantities to his taste". On several occasions the notation **(Metre)** in the book's margin indicates JBY's dissatisfaction on this score and, more precisely, his accents over certain syllables exhibit the author's manipulations of the "quantities", or stresses. So JBY offers to correct and criticise the following lines, deleting the words in brackets, underlining a weak line, adding a word and the notations in the margin and exposing what he takes to be WBY's bad metres (*see below middle*).

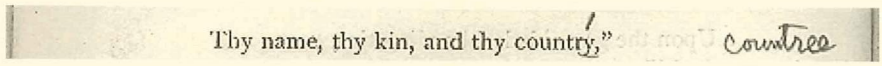
In another example, JBY's accent on a final syllable, his line under it and his marginal note are equally succinct (*see below bottom*).

In this instance, WBY appears to have been attentive, since the next published

Top: Passage from "Jealousy". Middle: JBY objects to WBY's metre. Bottom: JBY's opposition to the stress on the final syllable.







version would read, "But where are your noble kith and kin,/ And into what country do you ride?" (Later still he changed "into" to "from", which would have pleased JBY even better.)

Since so much of this first collection was never reprinted, it is unsurprising that few of the objects of JBY's criticisms survived. But it is also likely WBY (who was living in the same house at the time) actually saw and considered the marginalia addressed to him; and this is consistent with the evidence of this volume. It was JBY, apparently, who alerted WBY to the metrical value of the faery bride with whom Oisin rides off:

but is not "Niam" (Niambh) pronounced 'Neev'? as one syllable? Not 'Nee-am'?

WBY adopted "Neave" in the next version and "Niamh" later (though there was considerable editorial slippage in various printings). But a criticism that he partly and properly ignored was JBY's tetchy response to the line, "Her hair was of a citron tincture". JBY might have enlarged his vocabulary (and perhaps his palette) instead of demanding in the margin:

(citron fruit ? or what? yellow? or brown? what colour is "citron?").

It was the indefinite "tincture", not the colour, that was excised. The line became, "A citron colour gloomed in her hair".

JBY's marginalia are spread throughout the volume but some poems are particularly favoured with his comments. One such is "How Ferencz Renyi Kept Silent", which has been mentioned. Another, also about a man who goes mad, is "King Goll", which excited JBY's superciliousness:

Has he caught the fever again, poor man. Was he a sort of Celtic Nebuchardnezzar (or was he a Celt?).

JBY had the wit to cancel this query with a wavy line meant to make it illegible. Elsewhere he is more troublesome, though he may not mean to be:

If King Goll was a legendary character there ought to be here an explanatory note. "3rd Cent." explains nothing, & is an absolutely useless addition (absolutely useless to the general reader – ut mihi – at least).

And at one point, he demands,

What is it happened? What is the story of King Goll? (Had he anything to do with King Cole?).

The poem had been written in 1884 and was first published in 1887 in *The Leisure Hour* as "King Goll, An Irish Legend", along with WBY's long explanatory note. JBY must have recalled this printing, since the poem was illustrated by his drawing of mad King Goll done in 1885 with WBY as his model. It was one of JBY's rare successes in getting an illustration accepted for publication. As to the explanatory note, by 1889 WBY would have learned that he had carelessly misread his chief and precisely-identified source, conflating an adolescent prince of Ulster, Gall, with Goll Mac Morna, a mature Connacht chieftain. But WBY stuck with his mythological hybrid and for later printings adopted a strategic vagueness about the source. As to JBY, he thought well enough of his King Goll illustration to turn it, in 1900, into a painting. And John Quinn, New York lawyer and connoisseur, thought well enough of the painting to offer to buy it—the first contact between JBY and his future, lifelong patron. So Goll (or Gall), in whose place of refuge "all the madmen of Ireland would gather were they free", was a rather critical link between father and son both before and after JBY offered his edifications in the margin.

Mosada: A Dramatic Poem (1886), Yeats's first published book, was an offprint from a periodical. His father paid for the binding of it and also insisted on adorning it with his frontispiece portrait of his son, rather than with a representation of some scene from the play, which WBY thought more seemly. Yeats's second book, *The Wanderings of Oisin and Other Poems,* was published by Charles Kegan Paul under a muddled subscription arrangement that caused its author annoyance and embarrassment. Five hundred copies were printed, of which three hundred were bound and issued in January 1889. Fifty more quires were bound in the following month and six months later another fifty. The sheets remaining (fewer than a hundred copies) were transferred, in 1892, to T. Fisher Unwin and published by him in May of that year as *The Wanderings of Oisin: Dramatic Sketches, Ballads & Lyrics,* in the uniform binding of his Cameo Series, with a cancel title and a frontispiece representing Oisin, Niam and Saint Patrick, specially done by Edwin J. Ellis.

Remarkably, the Fisher Library's De Lury Collection (before the recent addition) held two of the 1889 copies (in their slightly different, original bindings) and a copy of the rarer 1892 issue. The volume under discussion (which happens to be in yet another variant of the 1889 binding) was purchased from the collection of the late Professor Robert O'Driscoll. It may be the only extant copy of a book by Yeats with marginalia by his father and there is a good deal more to say about it. I have prepared a full account of this magnificent addition to an outstanding Yeats collection for *Yeats Annual* 13, due in 1997.

Michael J. Sidnell
Director of Graduate Studies
Department of English

Mark your calendar for the Friends' events of the season...

Events for 1996 – 1997

All lectures begin at 8:00 pm.

Thursday 21 November 1996
"My Brief Careers as a Collector"
John Fraser, Master of Massey College

Tuesday 25 February 1997
"The Chief End of Book Madness"
Nicholas Basbanes, author of *The Gentle Madness*

Thursday 20 March 1997
"Papermaking and Industrial Espionage"
John Bidwell, Curator of Graphic Arts, Princeton University

Exhibitions for 1996 – 1997

All exhibition openings begin at 5:00 pm.

2 October – 20 December 1996
The Discovery of Insulin at the University of Toronto

16 January – 27 March 1997
The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of: The Life and Work of Frederick Coates
Exhibition Opening: Tuesday 21 January 1997

14 April – 27 June 1997
The Pediatric Collection of T. G. H. Drake
Exhibition Opening: Tuesday 22 April 1997

The Fisher Library Celebrates the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Discovery of Insulin

Seventy-five years ago this past summer, on a hot day in August, a young University of Toronto graduate student wrote a brief note to his fiancée, who was spending a holiday with friends near Coniston in northern Ontario. He apologized for not writing sooner and told her how hard he was working in the Lab at the Physiology Department. "I went back to the Lab at eleven P.M. and we worked all through the night and to-day until two," he wrote. Then he added "We got fine results." It was August 8, 1921. Charley Best's summer job in the Physiology Department, where he was assisting an inexperienced young doctor from London, Ontario in some rather unpromising research on diabetic dogs, had suddenly turned interesting.

When Charley Best wrote his note to his future wife, Margaret Mahon, he and Dr. Fred Banting had just completed a series of very encouraging experiments. They had injected three dogs, previously rendered diabetic by pancreatectomies, with an extract they had prepared in the lab from degenerated pancreas. In each case the dog's blood sugar had dropped after the extract was injected. These experiments, performed from July 30 to August 8, 1921, convinced both Banting and Best they were on the right track with their efforts to isolate the internal secretion of the pancreas in order to alleviate the symptoms of diabetes. They called their extract "iletin". In a purified form the world would come to know it as "insulin".

On August 9 Fred Banting drafted a letter to the head of the Physiology Department, Professor J.J.R. Macleod, who was spending the summer in Scotland. Banting's excitement is evident from the first sentence. "Dear Dr. Macleod," he wrote, "I have so much to tell you and ask you about that I scarcely know where to begin."

It had been difficult for Banting to convince Macleod, a distinguished physiologist and a recognized authority on experimental diabetes, that his idea for diabetes research was worthy of a trial. Banting had no specialized knowledge of physiology and no experience with experimental diabetes but he had been seized with an idea for isolating the internal secretion of the pancreas after reading an article on diabetes in a medical journal. He had sought out Macleod at the University of Toronto to ask him for laboratory space and assistance. Macleod had been sceptical but eventually he had agreed to give Banting the use of some space and facilities in the Physiology Department for the following summer. In addition, realizing that Banting had little previous research experience and would need help with the technical aspects of blood and urine testing, Macleod had assigned two of his students to work in turn as Banting's research assistants.

Charles Best and his friend and classmate, Clark Noble, had just graduated from the University's honours course in Physiology and Biochemistry in the spring

C.H. Best (left) and F.G. Banting (right) on the roof of the old Medical building with a diabetic dog being kept alive with injections of pancreatic extract. Spring 1922.

Charles H. Best and Margaret Hooper Mahon, 1921. (Reproduced from a photograph lent by Dr. Henry Best)

of 1921 and were planning on graduate work with Macleod in the fall. They tossed a coin to see who would work the first part of the summer with Banting. Best won the toss.

In May 1921 Banting closed down his London practice and came to Toronto to begin his first experiments with Best acting as his assistant. Macleod advised on surgical procedures and other aspects of the research until his departure for Scotland in mid June. Macleod had made it clear to Banting that he had little expectation of anything but "negative results" from the experiments, so it was with pride that Banting stated in his letter: "At present I can honestly state my opinion that ... the extract invariably causes a decrease in the percentage of blood sugar & in the excretion of sugar in diabetic dogs ..."

Macleod's letter of reply was cautious. He urged Banting to make additional experiments before drawing any conclusions. "I would say your results on Dog 408 were not absolutely convincing ...your results are definitely positive, but it is not absolutely certain." Macleod did promise his continuing support for the research, however, and gave permission for Best to carry on as research assistant. When he returned to Toronto in September, Macleod arranged for Banting to receive a stipend for his summer's work, and gave him improved facilities in the Physiology Department. Macleod also began to participate in the research more directly himself.

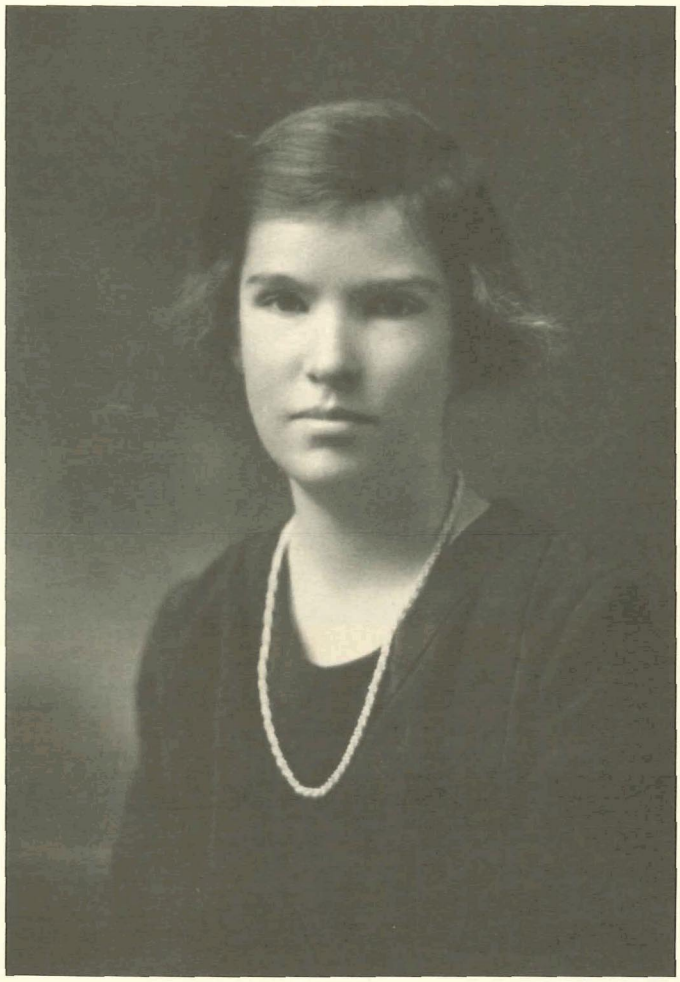
During the fall there were a number of important advances in the way in which the extract could be prepared but there still remained many impurities to be eliminated before it could be tried successfully on human diabetics. In December 1921, at Banting's request and Macleod's invitation, J.B. Collip, an experienced biochemist and a University of Alberta professor who was at Toronto on sabbatical, joined the research team. Before the year ended Collip had made several significant contributions to the research, including the development of procedures for testing the potency of various batches of extract on rabbits.

Early in January 1922 the first clinical trial of the extract was made at Toronto General Hospital where fourteen year old Leonard Thompson was injected with extract prepared by Banting and Best. The results were inconclusive, however, and the boy developed abscesses at the site of the injection. A second trial occurred on January 23, using extract prepared by Collip. This time the results were dramatic. Leonard's blood sugar dropped to normal and his condition showed an immediate improvement. On the point of death before the injections, Leonard was to live for another thirteen years with the help of insulin, becoming the first of the millions of diabetics who would benefit from the discoveries made by F.G. Banting, C.H. Best, J.J.R. Macleod, and J.B. Collip.

This fall the Fisher Library celebrates the seventy-fifth anniversary of the discovery of insulin with a special exhibition of original material documenting the early research carried out by Banting and Best and the subsequent contributions of J.J.R. Macleod and J.B. Collip. Among the items on display are pages from some of the original laboratory notebooks in which Banting and Best wrote up their experiments, as well as charts showing urine and blood sugar readings for several of the dogs, and their handwritten drafts of early reports and papers. One can read the notes, hastily jotted down as the experiments were taking place, and feel—seventy-five years later—as though one were peering over the shoulders of the researchers, watching them work their way towards one of the greatest medical breakthroughs of the twentieth century.

In addition to the early research documents, the exhibition includes photographs and letters from some of the diabetic children treated by Banting during the summer and fall of 1922. One display case tells the story of Teddy Ryder who arrived in Toronto for treatment, six years old, scarcely able to stand, weighing twenty-seven pounds. Less than a year later he wrote to Banting, "I am a fat boy now and I feel fine. I can climb a tree." Teddy Ryder was to live into his seventies with the help of insulin.

In another display case are letters and photographs of Elizabeth Hughes, the fourteen year old daughter of American Secretary-of-State, Charles Evans Hughes. She came to Toronto in August 1922 to receive treatment from Banting. His notes describe her as "extremely emaciated ... scarcely able to walk on account of weakness". Once she began receiving insulin her recovery was dramatic. By the end of September she was writing to her mother, "I look entirely different everybody says ... gaining every hour it seems to me in strength and weight ... it is truly



Elizabeth Hughes, 1923.

miraculous". In another letter she exclaimed, "Oh, it is simply too wonderful for words this stuff". By the end of November she was able to return to Washington, having gained over thirty pounds, and feeling energetic enough to contemplate riding horseback and taking swimming lessons. The letters on display are part of a recent gift to the Library by the family of Elizabeth Hughes in honour of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the discovery of insulin.

Other sections of the exhibition document the roles which the Connaught Laboratories and the Eli Lilly Laboratories played in developing procedures for the manufacture of insulin on a large scale. The Connaught Laboratories Archives have lent several vials of insulin manufactured by Connaught and by Lilly in 1922 and 1923. Correspondence between J.J.R. Macleod and G.H.A. Clowes, director of research at Lilly, illustrates the successful partnership between the University of Toronto's Connaught Laboratories and the Eli Lilly Company which enabled insulin to be distributed throughout the United States and Canada less than two years after its discovery.

Newspaper clippings from Banting's scrapbook illustrate the enormous publicity the discovery received, and reveal the growing controversy over which members of the research team deserved the most credit. A case in the Maclean-Hunter Reading Room on the Library's first floor displays portions of the accounts of the discovery which each of the four co-discoverers wrote in 1922 at the request of Colonel Gooderham, Chairman of the University's Board of Governors, who tried unsuccessfully to play peacemaker. Also on display in this Reading Room are Banting's Nobel Prize medal and citation awarded in 1923 jointly to Banting and Macleod. Additional material displayed on this floor illustrates the early life of the four co-discoverers and their later careers.

The exhibition draws together material from a number of collections donated to the University over many years. A large collection of F.G. Banting's papers was turned over to the University after his death in 1941. A second instalment came to the library in 1976 as a bequest from his widow, Dr. Henrietta Banting. In 1982 a large collection of C.H. Best's papers was transferred to the Library from his office in the Best Institute. Contained in these papers were two boxes of material pertaining to J.J.R. Macleod, whose correspondence and papers had been inherited and preserved by Dr. Best when he succeeded J.J.R. Macleod as head of the Physiology Department in 1929. The W.R. Feasby Papers, which contain biographical material on C.H. Best, were donated to the Library in 1983 and 1985 by the Canadian Diabetes Association which had received them from Dr. Feasby's widow, Margaret Feasby. The J.B. Collip Papers were donated in 1989 by Dr. Collip's daughter, Dr. Barbara Collip Wyatt. The collections of the Academy of Medicine, which include the precious notebook in which Banting first jotted down his idea for diabetes research on October 31, 1920, were placed on long term deposit in the Fisher Library in 1991.

The letters written by Elizabeth Hughes to her mother, described earlier in this article, are an especially moving part of this exhibition. They were donated to the Fisher Library this year by Elizabeth's husband, William T. Gossett, and their three children, W. Thomas Gossett, Antoinette G. Denning, and Elizabeth Evans Karaman.

Several important documents, letters and photographs in the exhibition have been lent to the Library by Dr. Henry Best from his collection of his father's papers. Additional material has been borrowed or reproduced from the University of Toronto Archives, the Archives of Connaught Laboratories Ltd., the collection of Professor Michael Bliss, the Canadian Museum of Health and Medicine at the Toronto Hospital, the University of Alberta Archives, and the Archives at the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

The exhibition opened on October 2, 1996 and will continue until December 20. It is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue describing all the items on display and containing a detailed historical account of the discovery, written especially for this occasion by Professor Michael Bliss, author of *The Discovery of Insulin*, published in 1982, and *Banting, a Biography*, published in 1984. The catalogue is available to Friends of the Fisher Library free of charge, and at a cost of $20.00 to non-members.

Katharine Martyn
Assistant Director
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

The Art and Design of Frederick Coates

The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of: The Life and Work of Frederick Coates is the subject of an upcoming exhibition at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, surveying the life and work of Frederick Coates (1890-1965), a classically-trained sculptor whose work spanned over four decades. The exhibition, of over seventy-five works, displays the artist's designs for architecture, graphics, theatre sets and costumes, and includes watercolours, drawings, photographs and objects documenting the artist's long and varied career. Many items in the exhibition will be shown for the first time.

After studying art at the Nottingham School of Art and at the Royal College in London, the English-born Coates emigrated to Canada in 1913, settling in Toronto where he worked as a model maker. During World War I, Coates served in the Canadian Army Medical Corps, where he turned his modelling ability from statuettes to soldiers, whose faces had been disfigured by shrapnel. In conjunction with the British Medical Corps, he studied photographs of patients before and after they had been wounded, and constructed plaster models to scale. In 1919 Coates returned to Toronto, where he lived for the rest of his life.

During the teens and twenties, Coates exhibited his sculpture at the Ontario Society of Artists and at the Royal Canadian Academy of Art. He also regularly exhibited his designs at the Society of Graphic Arts during the 1920s in Toronto. But it is his theatre sets and costume designs for which he will be remembered. As Art Director of the Hart House Theatre at the University of Toronto for the 1922-23 season and again from 1929-35, Coates was responsible for many of the settings, costume designs and lighting effects for the plays put on during these periods.

During this time, Frederick and his wife, Louise, also began work on one of his most important projects—the design and construction of their home, on the ravine overlooking the Scarborough Bluffs. Together, with the assistance of a carpenter and a stonemason, they constructed the whole of this Elizabethan-style house, complete with secret passage. The house was described by a journalist at the time as "one of the most romantic houses in Canada....It might be called a magic house, for if the exterior is changeless, the interior is as flexible as Mr. Coates's accomplishments and stage settings". The style of the house derived from the English medieval cottage, popularized by British architects and artists of the Arts and Crafts period during the late-nineteenth century. By the end of World War I, the style took hold in North America, recalling the ideal of handcraftsmanship, use of local materials and the fusion of the arts into everyday life.

Their story-book house had a sunken garden—designed by Coates—and an enormous stained glass window in the front, which was lighted with a spot-light from within and greeted visitors as they drove in at night. The dining room walls were done in gold leaf, overlaid with colour scenes from plays he produced, and an intriguing map of Sherwood Forest. (Coates was born in Nottingham, the birthplace of Robin Hood, and the house was christened "Sherwood"). The kitchen boasted a line-up of shining copper vessels, and the bedrooms were tiny replicas of medieval palace bed-chambers. Finally, there was the bathroom, an aquarium-like room, in which there were mermaids and fish done in relief so that one felt submerged in water when one stepped inside.

Fred Coates's studio was perhaps the most splendid room in a magnificent dwelling. Nominally a timbered room, its creator delighted in turning it into anything from an Elizabethan setting to a Spanish grandee's apartment. One day it would be an old world church with a massive, nailed gate; next week it would be a cowboys' camp.

Fred and Louise Coates entertained frequently and, for over three decades, the couple became well known for their masquerade parties and performances. The themes of their parties varied, and visitors would dress for entertaining events such as an Elizabethan evening, a Spanish masquerade, or a night of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. For over four decades, a

Top: Coates works on the mural for the Hart House Theatre.
Bottom: North side of Coates's home on the Scarborough Bluffs.

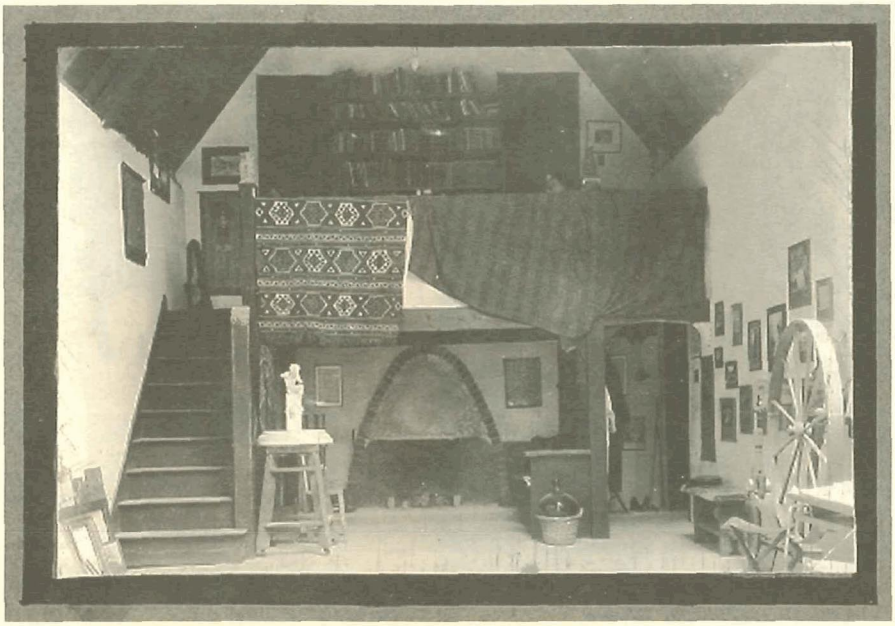
steady stream of well-known Torontonians, such as Vincent and Alice Massey; theatre directors such as Bertram Forsyth and Boris Volkoff; and artists like Florence Wyle, Charles Jeffreys, Yvonne McKague and Franklin Arbuckle, all visited Fred and Louise Coates at their house.

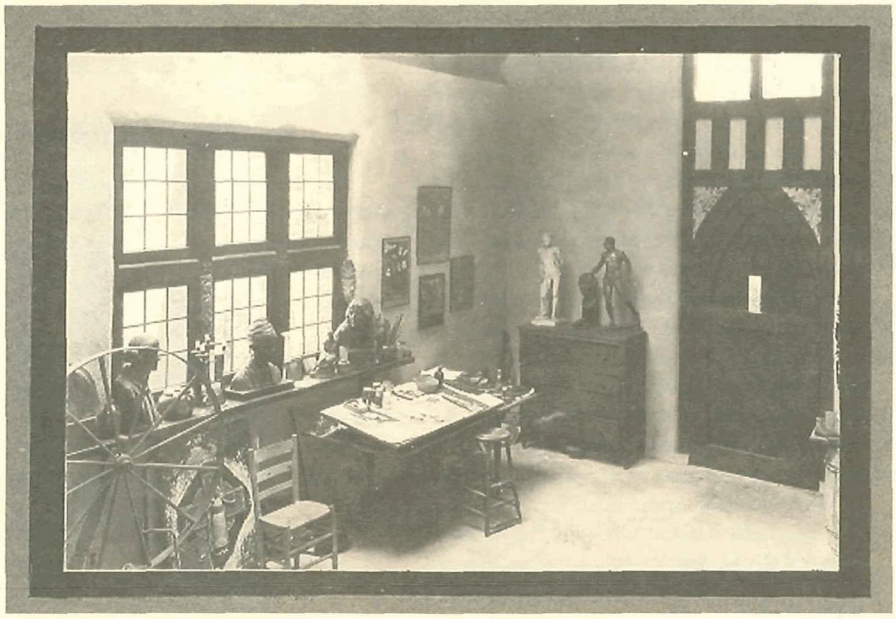
One of Fred Coates's greatest achievements was a unique mural based on the characters and scenes from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The mural, carved out of one solid piece of linoleum and painted to give the effect of combining the best qualities of stained glass windows and worked leather, took Coates two full summers to complete. During the summer of 1934 when he had plenty of free time, he drew a full-sized sketch. The next summer he worked in the linoleum proper and finished the work by early October. Coates explained he did scenes from *The Tempest* because that was the first play he professionally designed. This play was directed by Bertram Forsythe and received recognition all over Europe. The mural is now situated in the lobby of the Hart House Theatre at the University of Toronto.

After serving as Art Director of the Hart House Theatre, Coates taught model making at the University of Toronto's School of Architecture, until his retirement in 1962.

Fred and Louise Coates lived in their unique house until their deaths. Childless, and hoping to keep the place intact, they left it to the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto. Unfortunately many of the furnishings and art works were dispersed at auction. The works, which survive today in private collections and at the University of Toronto, provide a glimpse into the life and work of an extraordinary man.

The exhibition will include designs for the Hart House Theatre mural as well as examples of Coates's unique style of panel decoration. Designs and photographs for theatre productions such as *The Tempest*, *Peer Gynt*, and *The Dragon* are also included as well as original photographs of the interior and exterior of Coates's house in Scarborough. The exhibition offers a portrait of this fascinating designer and artist, especially for those interested in Canadian art and design from the twenties and thirties.





Top: The studio. Fireplace and gallery.
Middle: The studio. North window from the gallery.
Bottom: Coates at work.

The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of: The Life and Work of Frederick Coates runs from January 16 to March 27, 1997 at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. A catalogue will be available.

Paul Makovsky
Graduate Student
Department of Fine Art

Above: Caribou at Edge of Spruce Forest. *Ink wash by Thoreau MacDonald.*

Left: Wood Boy. *Illustration by Sarah Welch, ca. 1834–1868.*

New Greeting Cards!

Look for the Library's new greeting and Christmas cards.

All cards are reproductions from material in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.

Cards and exhibition catalogues can be purchased at the Sales/ Souvenirs / Lost & Found Desk on the second floor of the Robarts Library. Cards are sold at most fall meetings of the Friends of the Fisher Library.

Editor's Note

Corrections to the June 1996 issue: On page one, "Meriwether and Clarke" should, of course, have read Lewis and Clark.

The Cooper & Beatty logo on page seven was designed by Tony Mann, not Allan Fleming.

We regret that the name of Albert Masters was unfortunately omitted from the list of individual members of the Friends.

This issue was edited by Gayle Garlock, and Anne Jocz, with photographs by Philip Ower, scanning and image editing assistance by Terry Jones, and designed by Maureen Morin. Comments and/or suggestions should be sent to Gayle Garlock, Director, Development and Public Affairs, University of Toronto Library, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A5 (416) 978-7655.

The Halcyon: The Newsletter of the Friends of The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library is published twice a year in November and June. *Halcyon* includes short articles on recent noteworthy gifts and acquisitions of the Fisher Rare Book Library, recent exhibitions in the Fisher Library, activities of the Friends and other short articles of interest to the Friends.

Members of the editorial board of *Halcyon* are Gayle Garlock, Editor, Anne Jocz from the Fisher Library, and Maureen Morin from the Information Commons.

The H·A·L·C·Y·O·N

University of Toronto Library
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A5