



BOOKS AT BROWN

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FRIENDS of the LIBRARY of BROWN UNIVERSITY: PROVIDENCE, R. I.

GROTIUS COLLECTION

ONE of the most famous of the collections in the John Hay Library is shelved in a single glass-front bookcase and consists of one work in many different editions and issues. The principle of collecting on which it is based is quite different from the usual policy of libraries with regard to ordinary books, that is, that the first, the latest, or the best edition, as the case may be, is considered adequate for practical purposes. This is no ordinary book, however, but one of the great books, the foundation work in the science of international law, the *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* of Hugo Grotius. First published in Latin in 1625 at Paris, its importance was immediately recognized, and it went through six editions before the author's death in 1645. Thereafter it was many times re-issued and translated into Dutch, German, French, and English, under the auspices of successive editors. Professor George Grafton Wilson, who was instrumental in building up the collection when he was a member of the Brown faculty, has said: "Grotius's *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* is an attempt to bring into a systematic treatment those principles which have since become known as international law. Rich in quotations, it touches upon many other subjects, and its broad philosophical basis gives it permanent value. Conditions in Europe at the time when the work appeared gave it immediate and powerful influence in determining the course of modern political history. Of course many of the principles expounded by Grotius are no longer applicable, and many new principles . . . have gained recognition. Nevertheless, upon the foundation laid by Grotius, the modern science has been largely built."

A book that has helped to shape the course of history for three hundred years must be studied in connection with that history and seen against the background of changing conditions and ideas. That is why a collection of editions of the *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* has practical value in research. It is not enough for the scholar to know what Grotius wrote and published in 1625 or even the changes he himself made in subse-

quent editions of his book. It is equally important to know what other authorities have thought about what he wrote. This can best be learned from the study of the various editions whose different editors and translators represent the changing influences of history, tradition, and the development of law in their several periods and countries.

In 1900 the late William Vail Kellen made a gift to the Library of several hundred books on international law which became the nucleus of the Wheaton Collection, named for Henry Wheaton, distinguished Brown alumnus of the class of 1802, diplomat and writer on international law. The eight editions of Grotius included in this group were added to the three which were probably in the Library before that time. From this beginning the collection grew rapidly, chiefly through the interest of Mr. Kellen and the guidance of Professor Wilson, until it became one of the two best collections in the world. The other nearly complete collection was, and we earnestly hope still is, at The Hague in the Library of the Peace Palace. A bibliography compiled in 1925 by its librarian, Jacob Ter Meulen, located 68 editions and issues in that library. There are 79 recorded editions and issues between 1625 and 1939, and of these the John Hay Library now has 68. We lack only six of the 49 Latin editions and one each of the English, Dutch, and German translations as well as the one Spanish edition. These statistics refer only to editions of the complete text and do not attempt to cover the fairly numerous abridgments or volumes of excerpts with commentary, some of which are also in the collection at Brown.

While some of the Grotius editions and their variant issues are extremely rare, most of the important ones are not exceptionally scarce as rare books go, and not many of them have a monetary value comparable to their rarity. They seem never to have achieved the glamor that secures large auction prices. Of the first edition, Paris, 1625, there are sixteen copies known to exist, four of them in the United States. Probably a survey of American libraries would produce several others. The importance of our collection, however, lies in its remarkably close approach to completeness, rather than in the rarity of any particular item.

The author of *De Jure Belli ac Pacis*, Hugo Grotius, or de Groot in the Dutch form of the name, was one of the most remarkable men of his time. He was born to the scholarly life. His father was a director of the University of Leyden and his uncle its rector. In 1591 before Grotius was eight years old he had begun to compose Latin verse, and he entered the University at the age of eleven. When he was twelve, it is said, he converted his mother to the Protestant faith by learned arguments. At fifteen the young prodigy went to France with a diplomatic mission headed by Count Justin of Nassau and the great Dutch patriot Barne-

veldt, who was delighted with the boy's brilliance, which apparently was never soured by youthful conceit. Soon after his return from France he began his career as a publicist by editing, with notes, Martianus Capella's fifth-century Latin encyclopedia. At the same time he made a Latin translation of a book on navigation. Before he was twenty-one he had written a tragedy, also in Latin, and had been chosen to write an official history of the young Dutch Republic. About this time, too, he began the practise of law in Leyden, achieving success to the extent of having the Dutch East India Company among his clients. Legal practise, however, was too confining for his varied tastes, and after a few years he left it to divide his time between public service and writing. He was appointed attorney-general of Holland, Zeeland, and West Friesland, and some years later became pensionary of Rotterdam, in which capacity he was a member of the States-General. In 1613 he was sent to England on a diplomatic mission attempting to settle a dispute over fishing rights. Apparently his talents did not impress King James I, who stated his opinion of Grotius, for what it is worth, in rather harsh terms. The royal author of *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* called him "a pedant full of words and without judgment."

About this time in Holland there began one of those religious disputes common in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which in the present comparatively tolerant age we find so difficult to understand. A disagreement over what would seem to us a minor point of theology could in those times, and in this case did, lead to rioting in the streets and civil war. Grotius was far enough ahead of his time to realize the futility and the danger of such an internal struggle in a country that had so recently won its independence. But his efforts to make peace with moderation only put him at odds with the more powerful party led by Prince Maurice of Nassau, and he found himself allied with the group led by Barneveldt. Together they were arrested and tried for treason. Barneveldt was beheaded, but Grotius, somewhat less harshly treated, was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment and his property was confiscated. For twenty-two months he and Madame Grotius and their children lived in the isolated and well-guarded fortress of Loevestein. That he did not have to stay there longer was due to the ingenuity of his wife, the faithfulness and quick wit of a servant girl, and the loyalty of several of his friends in a town not far from the fortesss. He was carried out of the prison in a trunk that was supposed to contain books he had been allowed to borrow, and, disguised as a mason, he managed to get to Antwerp beyond the reach of the Dutch authorities. From there he went to Paris, where he was well received, and where he spent the rest of his life as a distinguished but never very

happy exile, honored by almost everyone but often in financial difficulties and harassed by Cardinal Richelieu, who disliked him.

Just once he attempted to go back to Holland, but he was not allowed to stay. A price was put on his head and again he had to flee the country, though this time his escape was less spectacular. Disheartened by the ingratitude of his country, he finally took the post of Swedish ambassador to the court of France, and died thirteen years later in 1645 on his return from a trip to the court of Queen Christina.

Although the years of his exile must have been bitter to Grotius, who was a sincere patriot, they were the period of his intellectual maturity, and while in Paris he wrote most of the books for which he is remembered. The *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* was begun, probably, not many months after his arrival in France. It is remarkable that a book of such fundamental significance and lasting application could have been written in that period. Not only were Grotius's personal troubles disturbing enough, but he wrote while the Thirty Years' War was ravaging Europe and in the midst of an ideological and social upheaval as intense in many ways as that of our own time. For this reason he carefully excluded contemporary references from his work so that it would have permanent value and not be considered as applying merely to the tangled problems of his day. Thus the principles of international law and order that he formulated three hundred years ago may still serve as a guide in our own groping efforts toward a workable organization of the world.

Jeannette D. Black

JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY

WITH APPRECIATION

The Friends of the Library fund of \$1176 for Latin American material has been spent. We hope in a later issue to give a report on the number and kinds of volumes bought.

Transportation difficulties, absences, and preoccupation with other activities have affected the stream of gifts to the Library, just as they have affected the Library activities of faculty and students. However, the Librarian's Report for 1943-44 (still in manuscript form) shows that gifts came from some three hundred individual donors. Some of the larger or more outstanding items were:

About four hundred carefully selected books of Arabic literature and as many more in Sanskrit and other foreign languages, from the estate of Andrew McCorrie Warren, '85.

Nearly seven hundred plays, for our Harris Collection of American Poetry and Plays, from Theodore Johnson, President of the Walter H. Baker Company.

The FRIENDS of the LIBRARY

CALENDAR, 1943-44

- Monday, November 1 "The Edward N. Robinson Collection of Books Relating to Athletics." Reminiscences of Brown's athletic activities 1900-1925. Speakers to be announced later.
- Monday, December 6 Some of the Intricacies of Book Publishing, by Mr. Frederic G. Melcher, of *Publishers' Weekly*.
- Monday, February 7 Collecting Celtic Literature, by Professor Fred N. Robinson, Harvard University.
- Monday, March 6 The collection of *The Wandering Jew* from the library of Mr. W. Easton Louttit, Jr., '25, described by Professor George K. Anderson, Brown University.
- Monday, May 8 Annual Meeting. Some Recent Discoveries Regarding Edgar Allan Poe, by Mr. Clarence S. Brigham, '99, American Antiquarian Society.
- Friday, May 26 Readings from his Poetry, by Mr. Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress.

To make the meeting in December more interesting to the FRIENDS, Mr. Melcher has suggested that they submit questions about book publishing or the book trade that he can answer in the meeting. Mr. Melcher, as publisher of the *Publishers' Weekly*, must have plenty of problems of his own, but he seems very willing to take on a few more. So, if you want to know how the paper situation is holding out, or what subject is most popular now, or what sells a book, send your questions in to the Editor of *Books at Brown*, John Hay Library, and he will forward them to Mr. Melcher.

OFFICERS: 1943-1944

Chairman: Kirk Smith, '14
Vice Chairmen: James C. Collins, '92
W. Easton Louttit, Jr., '25
John S. Murdock, '96
Frederick S. Peck
Clarence H. Philbrick, '13
Secretary-Treasurer: George L. Miner, '97

About one hundred books on Latin America, from Professor Irving A. Leonard.

Sixty specimens of fine printing from private presses in California, from Dr. Louis I. Newman, '13.

Forty copies each of twenty-four selected titles in the *Chronicles of America* series published by the Yale University Press, from the Providence Journal-Bulletin, "to broaden opportunities for study in American history and government."

The Edward N. Robinson Collection of Books Relating to Athletics has been established through a substantial gift of money and a dozen or more books presented by William P. Burnham, '07. The first meeting of the FRIENDS for this season is to be devoted to this collection and the honoring of Edward North Robinson, '96, football coach at Brown for twenty-three of the first twenty-five years of this century. Mr. Burnham hopes that others will join him in this permanent and useful expression of gratitude to Mr. Robinson.

DESIDERATA

The Librarian's stock of his *Report for 1940-1941 and 1941-1942* is exhausted. The return of any copies not needed will be appreciated.

The War Information Center needs extra copies of the *National Geographic Magazine* for July, August, September of this year. In fact, an extra subscription for the War Information Center would be appreciated. The *Saturday Evening Post* usually has an article or two worth clipping in every issue. Back numbers of this magazine would also be welcomed.

LIBRARY NOTES

BORROWED BOOKS SHOULD ALWAYS BE RETURNED

In July, the Assistant Superintendent of Butler Hospital was helping to tidy up their library and came across a volume with "Brown University" stamped on the title-page. It was volume 1 of *A Journal of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and the Arts*, London, 1797. Since the book was nothing that he thought would add to the Butler library and especially since it had the Brown University stamp, he called the John Hay Library to say that he would be glad to send it to us, assuming that it must be a duplicate. A check in our card catalog, however, showed that we had only volume 3 of this Journal. Later volumes 2, 4 and 5 were found at Butler Hospital library and returned to us. An examination of the volumes showed they had the old shelf mark that was used back in 1843, and they were also listed in the printed *Catalogue* of 1843, so they disappeared from the Brown shelves sometime

after that, but when and who borrowed them we shall never know, or who was kind enough to present them to Butler Hospital.

C. H.

THE NAVY — SUGGESTED READING

Last summer the Librarian with the cooperation of Captain H. M. Briggs, U. S. N., head of the Department of Naval Science and Tactics established a Naval Shelf in the Guild Room.

A list of supplementary reading for naval students was suggested by Captain Briggs and these together with other volumes from the library have been placed on this new shelf. In addition to several naval classics such as Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power on History* and Frost's *Battle of Jutland* there are to be found a number of biographies of naval heroes such as Lewis' Farragut and Morrison's Sims.

The content of the shelf has been balanced by the inclusion of several volumes on exploration by naval officers and a well-selected list of fiction from the pens of Marryatt, Melville, Cooper and Conrad. Any of the FRIENDS with a nautical turn of mind is certain to find these volumes of great interest.

Checks should be made payable to
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY
and mailed to the John Hay Library, Providence, R. I.