

**AN EXHIBITION OF ORIGINAL AND
OTHER EDITIONS, PORTRAITS AND
PRINTS, COMMEMORATIVE OF THE
FIVE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE DEATH OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER**

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An exhibition of original and other editions, portraits and prints, commemorative of the five hundredth anniversary of the death of Geoffrey Chaucer by Grolier Club

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GROLIER CLUB

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An Exhibition of
Original and Other
Editions, Portraits
and Prints, Commemora-
tive of the Five Hundredth
Anniversary of the Death
of Geoffrey Chaucer, the
Father of English Poetry



The Grolier Club, Twenty-nine
East Thirty-second Street, January
25th to February 10th MCCCCC 7



INTRODUCTION.

THE present year of grace, 1900, marks the five hundredth anniversary of the death of Geoffrey Chaucer, whose wonderful creations have delighted all, from his day to our own, who have loved English Poetry.

Following the example of former exhibitions, the Committee takes advantage of this opportunity to bring together for the first time, in America at least, as many of the representative editions of the works of the Father of English Poetry as can be found in the collections of the members of the Grolier Club.

No apology seems necessary for the absence from this exhibition of so many of the early and rare volumes which can be found in the bibliographies, but not, alas! in our libraries.

One of the earliest productions of Caxton's Press was an edition of the "Canterbury Tales," issued probably in 1478. This was

followed about 1484 by a second edition, re-producing—so the critics tell us—a better manuscript. The “Canterbury Tales” were also printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498, and by Richard Pynson about 1493 and in 1526.

“Troilus and Cresyde” and other minor works were printed by Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde and Pynson.

The first collective edition was printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532, and thereafter followed numerous blackletter editions until the final one of 1687.

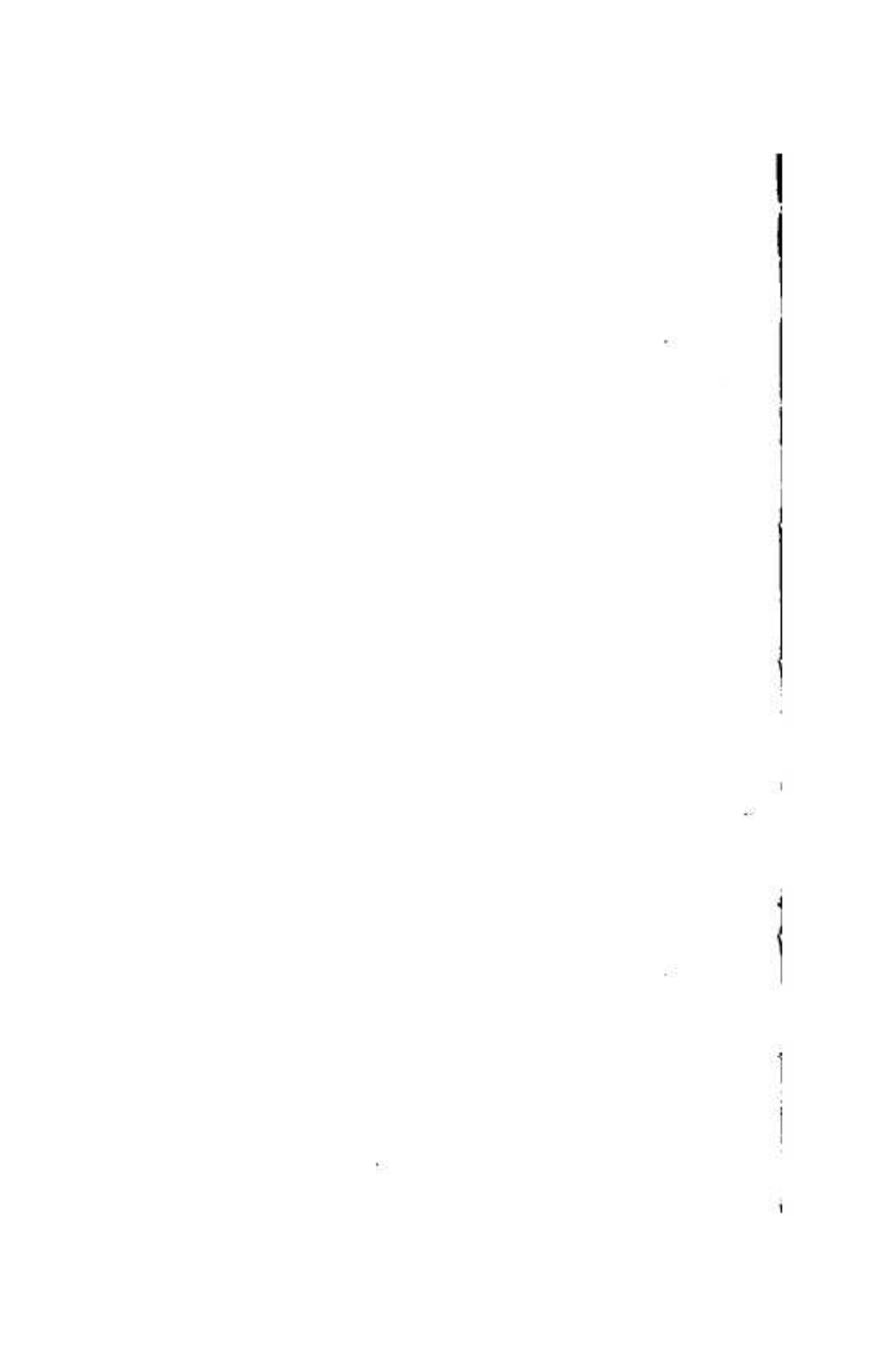
The editions of Caxton, Wynkyn de Worde and Pynson are very rare and are practically never seen in the market. The Committee therefore feels that the “editio princeps” of the “Canterbury Tales” printed by Caxton, and Wynkyn de Worde’s “Troilus and Cresyde” of 1517 which appear in the present exhibition, will afford rare pleasure to those who love and value old books.

Beginning with the Thomas Godfray edition of 1532, the noble blackletter folios follow in regular order—and last, though by no means least, the Kelmscott Press Chaucer, the greatest production of the late William Morris’s work as a printer, will be found side by side with the editions of the early printers—and boldly challenging comparison.

The first critical attempt to edit Chaucer was made by Thomas Tyrwhitt in 1775. His original edition, as well as the later impressions published by Pickering, are here exhibited; and also the latest and ripest results of critical investigation of original manuscripts in the editions of Skeat and Pollard. No Chaucer exhibition would be complete without Blake's quaint "Canterbury Pilgrims," and the rival plate after Stothard is also here in both unfinished etching and completed proof.

The addition of a fairly representative collection of the various engraved portraits of Chaucer will, it is hoped, be a pleasant feature. The best portraits of him are based on the portrait which his follower Thomas Hoccleve caused to be painted on one of the leaves of his own "Regement of Princes," now preserved in the British Museum. Other portraits exist, but are less carefully drawn. They serve, however, by their general resemblance, to show us that the one which we owe to the piety of Hoccleve is no mere fancy sketch.

The compilers of this catalogue wish to express their indebtedness to Prof. Lounsbury for the many excellent notes extracted from his invaluable "Studies in Chaucer."





Chaucer's Works.

1. The Canterbury Tales. First edition.

Fol. 1: Whan that Apprill with his
shouris sote | And the droughte of
marche had pcid y^a rote | And badid
euery veyne in suche licour | Of whiche
vertu engendrid is the flour | . . . [Fol.
371a:] . . . Explicit Tractatus Galfrydi
Chaucer de | Penitencia vt dicitur pro
fabula Rectoris. [Fol. 371b:] [N]ow
pray. Ito hem alle that herkene this
litol tretyse | or rede, that yf ther be ony
thing that liketh hem, that | therof they
thanke our lord. . . . Wherefore I beseke
you mekely . . . that ye for me praye
that crist . . . forgeue me . . . of my
translacions of wordly vanytees . . .

WORKS OF CHAUCER.

as is the book of troylus, the book also of fame, the book of xxv. ladies, the book of y^e duchesse, the book of seynt valentyns day of the parlament of birdis, the talis of Caunterbury tho that sownyn vnto synne, the book of the lyon . . . and many a songe & many a lecherous laye . . . so that I may be one of hem at the day of dome that shal be sauid. Qui cū . . . Amen. [Westminster, William Caxton, about 1478].

Small folio, in Type No. 2 (according to William Blades), without folios, signatures, or catch-words. Apparently issued as 374 leaves, of which leaves 1, 266, and 374 were blank; or, in other words, as 47 sheets of eight leaves each, except the thirty-third which had ten, the fortieth which had six, and the forty-seventh which had six leaves.

First edition of the first great English poet, printed by the first of English printers. It is not only one of Caxton's earliest and rarest books (only eleven copies are known); from a literary view-point, it is emphatically the chief production of his press. Blades placed it under No. 12 in his list of Caxton's books, but as he considered that the first seven articles in his list were all produced by Colard Mansion at Bruges between 1474 and 1478, and as Caxton returned to England in 1476, and remained there until his death, this