

Choice 12

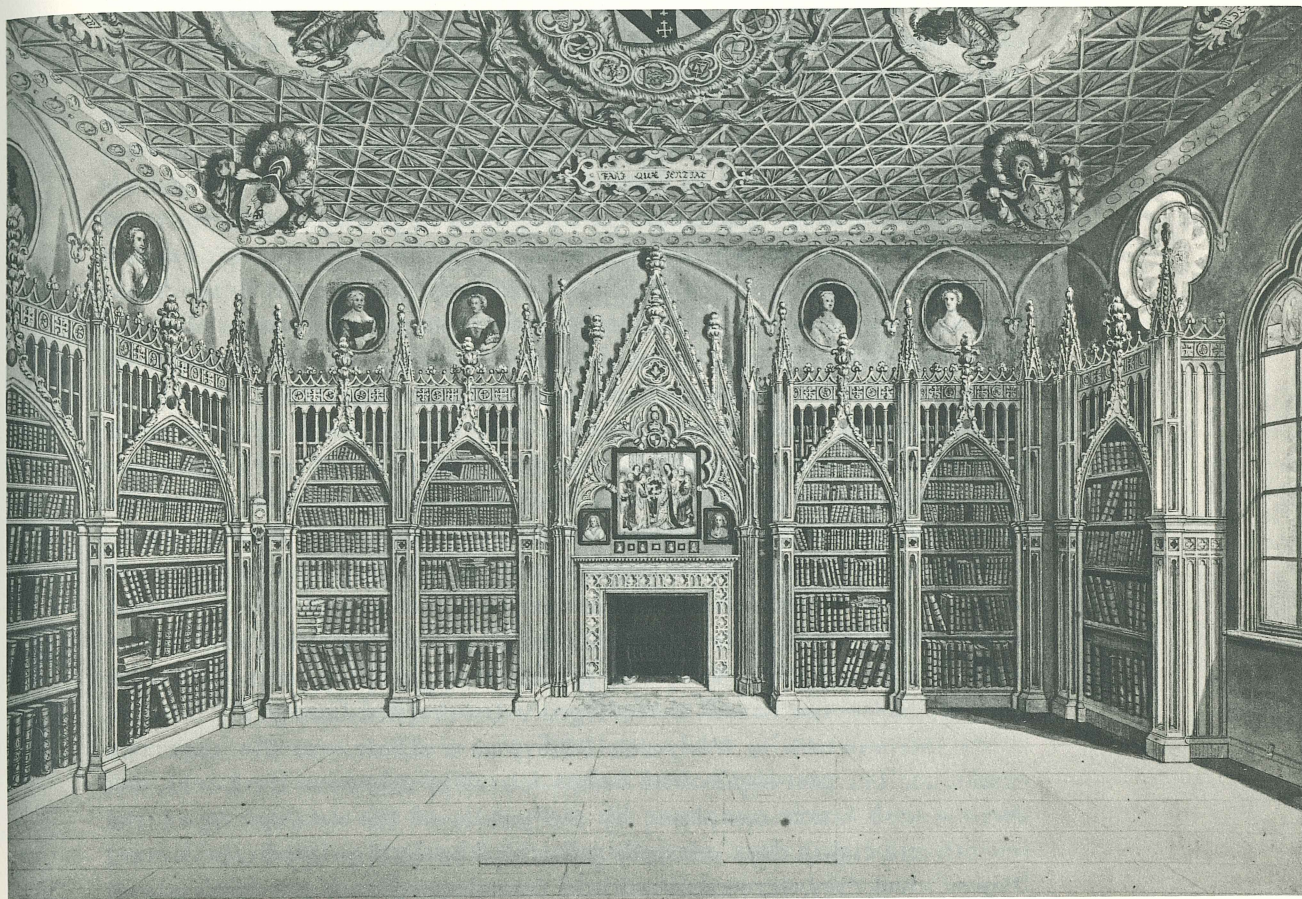
Walpole's Copy of Lysons, *Environs of London*, 1792-96

Fortunately, I realized from the first that I should collect the books Walpole owned as well as those he wrote and printed. I knew nothing about his library, but I knew that every library is a projection of the person who makes it. I also liked handling and reading the books that Walpole cared enough about to buy and annotate as he had annotated the first of his books that I saw. It was Lord Baltimore's *Coelestes et Inferi*, Venice, 1771, not a tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner. It was with the Strawberry Hill detached pieces at Scribner's that started my collection in 1924 and has Walpole's note on the half-title, "It is very questionable, whether the original Work of which the following is called a republication ever existed. At least such a poem is utterly unknown in England; nor is any book written by the last Lord Baltimore known, but a silly account of his Travels in prose. H.W." I wanted it, but felt that its price, \$350, was beyond me. Happily, it reappeared at Sotheby's in 1938 and was bought by Maggs for me at £12. The Depression had its compensations for collectors.

The first book I bought from Walpole's library came to me in December 1924 from Gabriel Wells. It is a strong candidate for this Choice, but I am making it Choice 13 for reasons I explain there. The book is an octavo in calf with Walpole's arms on the sides. The elegant spine reads, "Poems of Geo. 3." Walpole wrote on the inside of the front cover, "List of Pieces in this volume

Rodondo, in two Cantos.
Patriotism, a Mock Heroic.
Bettenham's Poems.
The New Bath Guide."

and added the authors' names on the title-pages, "Mr Dalrymple," "Richard Bentley," "Mr Christopher Anstey." On the title of Bentley's



Horace Walpole's library, showing the arrangement of books.

Patriotism he added below the year 1765, "March 19th." In 1924 I didn't know how important Bentley was in Walpole's life, and that by 1765 they had parted company, but I enjoyed one of Walpole's marginal notes, "Ld Wilmington said the D. of Newcastle lost an hour every morning and ran after it the rest of the day." When I re-read this now after more than half a century there return the witty Lord Wilmington, the fussy Duke of Newcastle, and Horace Walpole recording Wilmington's *bon mot* for us.

He could afford to buy whatever he wanted. Space was no problem for him; when he ran out of it he built another room. His was not a large collection of books by country house standards, only some 7200 volumes as compared with Topham Beauclerk's 30,000, but Walpole bought his books to read, as his letters and his marginalia in perhaps a third of them show. The first books we hear of, which he asked his Mama to get for him at the age of eight, are "the yearl of assax" and "Jan Shore." Pote's bookshop at Eton was where his library got its real start in company with Gray, West, and Ashton. An appendix in Hazen's *Catalogue of Horace Walpole's Library* lists the books he had at Eton and Cambridge. Over half, 79 out of 147 volumes, are at Farmington; all have his name and the date when he bought them. Among them are textbooks, Palairer's French grammar, Moll's *Maps of the Ancient World*, Webster's *Arithmetic* over which the owner shed unmanly tears; there are the classical authors one would expect, Homer, Xenophon, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid; an unpurgated *Satyricon* was added when he was thirteen. Earlier he was given the seventy-six volumes of the classics by the Duke of Brunswick who had received from Sir Robert Walpole's government £100,000 in exchange for the copy of George I's will that allegedly disinherited George II.

My introduction to Walpole's library as a whole was the 1842 sale catalogue. The first eight of its twenty-four-days' sale were the books, but there was so much complaint by the public of the cataloguing of the seventh and eighth days' sales, the prints and books of prints in the Round Tower, that they were removed and recatalogued in a ten-days' sale in London a month later; that is, it took sixteen days to sell the library. The eight issues of the sale catalogue with their inaccuracies were first discriminated in 1915 by Percival Merritt in a handsome catalogue designed by Bruce Rogers.

My knowledge of the library was greatly increased in 1931 when Wyndham Ketton-Cremer took my wife and me to call on his neighbors, the Walpoles of Wolterton, and I saw the manuscript "Catalogue of Mr Horace Walpole's Library at Strawberry Hill, 1763" that was compiled,

I think, by one of Walpole's government clerks. Walpole kept it up himself until 1768; later it was added to by Kirgate. I am eternally grateful to the Walpoles for letting me have the catalogue photostated because the Strawberry library could not have been reconstructed without it.

We now know every book that Walpole owned and on which shelf it stood in the three libraries at Strawberry Hill. The main library was 28 by 17½ and 15 feet high. The *Description* tells us that the books were "ranged within Gothic arches of pierced work, taken from a side-door case to the choir in Dugdale's *St Paul's*." Each of its cases, or "presses," had a predominant subject: royal and noble authors in A, coins and medals and the fine arts in B, fine arts and prints in C and D, topography in E, French literature (800 volumes) in F and G, English history and literature in H, I, and K, the classics and Italian literature in L and M. There was a very special press in the corner between D and E, the locked Glass Closet, in which Walpole kept the books he did not want everyone to handle. Of its 304 books 88 are at Farmington and the British Library has 42. The unlocated Glass Closet books will doubtless reappear in time because most of them probably have notes by Walpole that more and more people now recognize. The library in the Round Tower at the west end of the house, which was 22 feet in diameter with 41 feet of shelving, 4¾ feet high, had presses A to Y chiefly for prints and books of prints. The still smaller library in the Offices, whose presses ran from N to V, housed contemporary books arranged by subjects much as in the main library.

"The Library system" in England and her colonies during the eighteenth century was what modern librarians call, disapprovingly, "fixed location." The cases, or presses, of the books at Strawberry and Yale were given capital letters, as I have said. The letters were followed by two digits. The first digit in libraries that descended from Cambridge, as did Strawberry and Yale, was the lowest shelf in the press; the second digit was the place of the book on the shelf. The first digit in books that followed Oxford practice was the top-most shelf. In time Walpole and Kirgate dropped the second digit because they and others put the books back on the shelves out of order. The pressmarks are proof of Walpole's ownership, which his bookplates are not, for old-time booksellers told me that before I came along eager to buy any book from Strawberry Hill they would soak off the bookplate in a then worthless book and sell it for half-a-crown or stick it into another book and so create a "ghost." The covers with their precious pressmarks went into the office fire to save a little coal and the book itself was thrown into a sack, which when filled was sold for a pit-

tance as waste-paper. How many books were so destroyed we don't know, but fifty years ago Walpole's bookplate was relatively common and I bought several of the ghosts before I knew about the Strawberry pressmarks.

Their importance is illustrated by one of the books without any sign of Walpole's ownership that Chapman sent up to Christie's from Knowsley, as described in Choice 10. The book was Norden, *Description of Middlesex and Hartfordshire*, 1723, which had been rebacked after 1842 and given nineteenth-century endpapers on which was pasted Lord Derby's bookplate. Walpole's Manuscript Catalogue shows that Norden's Strawberry pressmark was E.3.34, which I wrote on the fly-leaf opposite the front cover after the book reached Farmington. When its nineteenth-century endpaper was removed, there was Walpole's bookplate in its proper place and above it, just where it should be, E.3.34. Another example of the pressmarks' value is in Walpole's copy of Prior, *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1718, a large folio that was bought for Lord Derby in 1842 by Boone. Chapman and Miss Povey, the new Knowsley librarian, found a superb copy of the book, but it lacked all signs of Walpole's ownership, his notes, bookplate, and the Strawberry pressmarks, L.1.1. Chapman and Miss Povey looked long and hard for L.1.1. without success. Shortly after the final session of the Derby sale a stranger in Darkest Maryland reported a book that had belonged to Walpole's mother. It was not for sale, but the owner would part with it for a set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The book proved to be Prior's *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1718, with its covers hanging by a few threads. On a front fly-leaf was written, "Catherine Walpole her book." Walpole's bookplate was missing, but above where it had been was L.1.1. When I hurried off my *Britannica* to the owner I asked him where he found the book. He turned out to be a collector of firearms who was stationed near Phenix City, Alabama, during the War. On his first week-end from camp he found in a Phenix City junkshop a brace of dueling pistols that he simply had to have. The price was exorbitant, but the junkman finally offered to throw in "an old book." The old book was L.1.1. Lord Derby had made it even more forlorn by entering the Knowsley pressmark upside down on the back endpaper. How had the book got from Knowsley Hall in Lancashire to a junkshop in Phenix City, Alabama? My guess is that Lord Derby, who had a fine copy of the book, told his librarian to dispose of the shabby duplicate in Liverpool even though it had been Walpole's; after all, he had dozens of Walpole's

books. Liverpool and Alabama before our Civil War were drawn together by the cotton trade. I suggest that this large heavy book sailed from Liverpool to Alabama in a tall ship as ballast.

By 1938 I realized we must have a catalogue of Walpole's library with not only its authors, titles, places of publication, sizes, and dates, but the history of each copy in so far as we could recover it from auction records, booksellers' catalogues, bookplates, and signatures of former owners. The use Walpole made of his books in his letters and works should also be given. I began by collating the books in the 1842 Sale and Manuscript Catalogues. This was routine for many of the books, but an expert was needed to deal with the rest and I turned to Allen Hazen for help. He spent several years making the catalogue, chiefly in the summers, and when the Yale Press published his *Catalogue of Horace Walpole's Library* in 1969 in three substantial volumes it became a landmark in bibliographical studies. It is in daily use at Farmington and the Walpole room at Yale and by John Brooke, who is editing the Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Memoirs in London. Serious Walpolian studies are impossible without Hazen's catalogues and Strawberry bibliographies.

In May 1957 I gave the Sandars Lectures on Bibliography at Cambridge. A liberal definition of "Bibliography" was necessary to make me eligible to be a Sandars Reader, but I felt safe in my subject, *Horace Walpole's Library*. I spent six months on each of the three lectures: the books and their arrangement at Strawberry Hill, the use Walpole made of them, and their dispersal in 1842 and partial recovery since. The lectures were given on successive afternoons following tea, the ideal hour for lectures in England when the audience is cheered but not inebriated. I asked the University Librarian about how much of an audience I might expect, reminding him of the visiting lecturer at Cambridge who had gone gallantly forward with an audience of only one. At the end of an hour the lecturer paused and asked his auditor if he might take five more minutes of his time to clear up a final point. "Take all the time you want, governor," the man replied with a wave of his hand. "I'm your taxi waiting to take you to the station." "I know," I said to the unsmiling Librarian, "I'll have more than one. There will be my wife and *you*" and I named eight Cambridge friends. "Will there be anyone else?" "Oh, yes," the Librarian replied promptly and paused, "at least for the first lecture because they want to see what you look like." In the event, old friends came from far and wide and the audience got to nearly sixty each day; very good,

the Librarian assured me, for a Sandars Lecture. Mine were handsomely printed by the Cambridge University Press in an edition of 750 copies, and were reprinted in Hazen's *Catalogue of Horace Walpole's Library*.

The book I am rescuing from Strawberry Hill is Lysons, *Environs of London*, 4 vols, 4to, 1792-96. I considered seriously saving Pope's copy of Homer's *Works*, Amsterdam, 1707, in which Pope wrote his name three times and gave the date when he finished his translation of Homer; he also drew Twickenham Church from his garden on a fly-leaf. After his death the book came into Walpole's possession probably through a bookseller. Walpole noted below Pope's statement about his translation that the drawing of Twickenham Church was made by the poet himself. In the second volume Pope wrote his Epitaph to Mrs Corbet in pencil. Our other Popeiana include Walpole's set of his *Works*, 1741-43, with identification of people and quotations from other poets on whom Pope drew, a fine portrait of him in later life by Vanloo, and drawings of him and his mother by Richardson that belonged to Walpole. We also have a "portrait" of Pope's villa that Walpole commissioned his neighbor Samuel Scott, the English Canaletto, to paint, but I put Pope aside because he was not one of Walpole's favorite authors and because the objects are for me examples of casual collecting made as occasion offered rather than planned. The library has many other candidates for rescue, but I think Walpole would be pleased by my saving Lysons because he loved the histories of counties, towns, cathedrals, and great houses. "I am sorry I have such predilection for histories of particular counties and towns," he wrote in 1780, "there certainly does not exist a worse class of reading." Some years earlier he said, "I do not see why books of antiquities should not be made as amusing as writings on any other subject," and he went on collecting, annotating, and writing about them until he died.

The *Environs of London* was dedicated to him. He extra-illustrated it and bound the four royal quartos handsomely in red morocco. Into each of the first three volumes he pasted four pages of "notes on Mr Lysons' Environs." His first note tells us: "This work is one of the most authentic books of antiquities ever published, the Author having with indefatigable Industry personally visited every Parish and every Office of Record from which the extracts were made; and having by the amiableness of his Character been favoured by the Possessors with the sight of many original Deeds, that State the Tenures and Descents of several considerable Mansions and lands described in the Account." Lysons displeased Walpole in the chapter on Twickenham by mentioning several of Strawberry's

chief treasures. "I must tell you," Walpole wrote him, "that as I foresaw, they are a source of grievance to me, by specifying so many articles of my collection, and several that are never shown to miscellaneous customers. Nay, last week one company brought the volume with them, and besides wanting to see various invisible particulars, it made them loiter so long by referring to your text, that I thought the housekeeper with her own additional clack, would never have rid the house of them." This was a little hard on Lysons because most of his account of Strawberry came from the *Description*, but Walpole's defense would doubtless have been that he kept nearly all copies of it out of public hands. Lysons appears on the title-page of the *Environs* as "Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of Orford," an instance of peers still having "domestick" chaplains. Earls were entitled to four, but Walpole seems to have been content with two. The warrant of his second, Benjamin Suckling, issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Office of Faculties, is at Farmington, signed "Orford," with Kirgate's signature as a witness. Private Chaplaincies were handed out by peers to help youthful clergymen gain higher preferment. Lysons was an agreeable young antiquary and so a congenial appendage to Walpole's life. His *Environs* has a special place in my library because it was given me by my wife on the day we became engaged.

The runner-up to Lysons in this Choice is "Arms of the Knights of the Garter," which Walpole shelved in the Glass Closet. It was blazoned on vellum for Queen Elizabeth in 1573 by Sir Gilbert Dethick, Garter-King-of-Arms, and bound in red velvet. Later the monogram of Charles I was stamped on the rear cover. The book belonged in the eighteenth century to Walter Robertson, Mayor of King's Lynn, for which Walpole sat at the end of his parliamentary career. Below Robertson's signature Walpole wrote, "This book was given to me by Mr Walter Robertson Mayor of Lynn, 1762. Horace Walpole."

The Glass Closet books were miscellaneous. Among ours from it are the second Shakespeare Folio, 1632, an exchange from the Folger Shakespeare Library, and two excessively rare books of swan marks that came from Knowsley. The marks were branded on the birds' bills to identify their owners. The handsomer of the two books begins with a declaration of an Edward IV statute that "No person may have a swan mark except he have lands to the yearly value of five marks, and unless it be by grant of the King or his officers lawfully authorized or by Prescription." The Glass Closet removed from the casual visitor the two books in the library that would be classed today as "erotica," illustrations of the Spintrian Medals

of Tiberius, for which Walpole wrote a title-page and noted he bought it "at the sale of Sir Clement Cotterel's Library, 1764," and Richard Payne Knight's *Account of the Worship of Priapus*, 1786, for the Dilettanti Society. The latter is a magnificent copy that was presented to Walpole by Sir Joseph Banks on behalf of the Society, of which Walpole was not a member. He wrote on the fly-leaf that "this copy was sent to me for having permitted Mr Knight the author to make a Drawing of my bronze of Ceres, which is engraved in Table viii. H.W." He was shocked by the book even though his copy lacks the more explicit prints found in other copies.

A third of the books that were at Strawberry Hill are still missing. Eighty percent of those recovered, some 2414 titles, are at Farmington. In the thirties and forties I got one (and a letter to or from Walpole) on the average of one every four or five days; now I do well to get four or five a year. Since their market value has increased enormously it is odd more don't appear. We know, as I have said, that some of the books were destroyed by booksellers, but hundreds more have lost their identities through rebinding and are sitting unrecognized on learned shelves. Until quite recently most librarians lacked Walpole's regard for provenance and discarded the bookplates and marks of earlier ownership when rebacking and rebinding their books. One of Allen Hazen's students found over forty of Walpole's books in the British Library that had not been identified as his. Lars Troide, a young colleague in the Yale Walpole, found the first volume of Walpole's copy of Egerton Brydges' *Topographical Miscellanies*, 1792, in the Yale stacks. It was rebound after 1842, Walpole's bookplate and the Strawberry pressmarks were discarded, but his annotations brought it swiftly to Farmington in accordance with the generous practice begun by Andrew Keogh, the Yale Librarian, forty years earlier.

Walpole wrote his memoirs and letters in the library, the walls of which were lined from floor to ceiling with books. His copies at Farmington are shelved in the same order as at Strawberry. In our North Library Press A is on the right of the door as you face it from the inside; Press M is on the left, with the books from the Round Tower and Offices between it and the door. Over the door is a water-color of the main library flanked by drawings of the river and garden. Near the books formerly in the Glass Closet and Press E is a drawing of Walpole showing him seated by them. Few are insensitive to his presence as they stand amidst his books.