



Robert Proctor

THE LIBRARY.

ROBERT PROCTOR.



ROBERT GEORGE COLLIER PROCTOR, whose name will not lightly be forgotten by students of early printing, was born at Budleigh Salterton in Devonshire on May 13, 1868. In a sketch so slight as this much genealogy would be out of place, and I will therefore not try to trace his pedigree from the baby Proctor to whom Queen Anne, as his god-mother, presented, by way of 'christening mug,' a silver tankard bearing the royal arms and of truly royal dimensions, which is still preserved in the family. It is more to our purpose to note the literary and intellectual influences among his immediate forebears. His grandfather, whom we may call Robert I., in 1825 published with Archibald Constable and Co. a 'Narrative of a Journey across the Cordillera of the Andes and of a Residence in Lima and other parts of Peru in the years 1823 and 1824' (pp. xx. 374). A note in the family copy of this work states that 'the Author was the second son of George Proctor of Clewer Lodge, Windsor, and was born there the 25th April, 1798. He entered the army and served in the 59th Regiment for a short time, until Peace put a stop to promotion,

during which time he was wrecked with his regiment on the coast of Ireland in the Lord Melville transport. He took the journey described as Agent for the Contractor of the Peruvian Loan. He died the 12th November, 1875." Apparently this was Robert I.'s only essay in authorship, though he lived to be seventy-seven, and had leisure enough to divide his life between Italy and England. He had, however, one very literary connection, having married a sister of the well-known scholar John Payne Collier, to whom he was already related through their fathers having married sisters. Of the marriage of Robert I. with Miss Collier, Robert II., our friend's father, was the elder of two sons, while of the two daughters one married George Street, R.A. the architect of the Law Courts. The second Mr. Robert Proctor was educated at Eton and Charterhouse, where he imbibed a strong love of the classics, but during one of his school-holidays a severe attack of rheumatic fever so crippled him that he was shut out not only from the University but from any active career in after life. The keen strong face which is seen in his photographs shows, however, that he was not in the ordinary sense an invalid, but able to take his full share in all intellectual interests. In 1867 he entered on thirteen years of a very happy married life with Miss Anne Tate, and of this marriage Robert George Collier Proctor, born the next year, was the only offspring.

When a father, himself a good classic and of strong literary instinct, is perforce at home all day, an only child soon acquires bookish tastes. It is thus not surprising to be told that no one knew

quite how the small Robert III. learnt to read, and that a book rather than a toy was always chosen when a present was offered. At some early age he went to a preparatory school (Daymond's) at Reading, and got on there only too quickly. At ten he was sent to Marlborough, but remained there less than a year, partly owing to trouble with his eyes, which made it desirable that they should be carefully watched. In the meantime his father had died, and mother and son now settled down at Bath, with a devotion to each other which ripened into a delightful comradeship. More than any other influence this friendship with his mother enriched and harmonized the whole of Robert Proctor's life, and though it is far too sacred a subject to be written of lightly, the warmth of the relation between them must be borne in mind by any one who would understand his character.

Bath College now became Proctor's school, and as to his life here the following notes have been kindly supplied by his headmaster, Mr. T. W. Dunn, to whom he dedicated in after years his monograph on 'Greek Printing in the Fifteenth Century.'

'Robert Proctor left Marlborough, where the climate was thought too severe for him, and came to Bath College in January, 1881, and remained there till he went to Oxford, October, 1886, after gaining an open scholarship at Corpus.

'I remember him better than I remember any boy of his time, for he had many claims to be remembered, though, as often in the case of men of the more gifted order, it is not easy to say in what those claims consisted.

He stood aloof from his fellows in an isolation that lost him no respect or goodwill of boys or masters, from whom he seemed to want little, though always willing to do or give anything that could be required of him.

‘He had ways of his own to go, and was confident in his own resources. I can therefore well understand his wandering off alone without guide or companion on the dangerous road where he lost his life. It was what he might have been expected to do, and I must believe that those who knew him in later days must have found him often astray from the common ways in his choice of work, and his manner of doing that work. He was born for out-of-the-way scholarly pursuits and was early mature in classical learning, though I think he was not likely to continue long on a beaten track or to take trouble with what was commonplace or familiar.

‘He was ever a lover of books, and he took up with him to Oxford a library unusually large for an undergraduate, and it grew much larger before he left the University, and must have continued to grow till the end.

‘While at Oxford he translated and printed a translation of a play of Plautus, I think the *Captivi*, which was that year acted in Latin at the school.

‘After his Oxford course I rarely saw him, but from time to time he knew how to remind his old master that he was always held in affectionate memory, nor was this feeling unreciprocated, for he was one of those sincere natures of whom, when once understood, we never change our estimate, nor would we lightly forfeit their confidence and goodwill.’

His shortness of sight probably handicapped Proctor for most school games, but I imagine that the aloofness of which Mr. Dunn writes was due less to this than to the fact that the feeling of absolute comradeship with his mother had already

begun, and that this intellectual intimacy gave just the touch of difference from the ordinary school-boy which tends to keep that irresponsible person at a little distance. Mother and son were already tasting the delights of walking tours together in England, France and Switzerland, and when Robert won a scholarship at Corpus (at that time by far the most distinguished of the smaller colleges at Oxford), Mrs. Proctor took lodgings in Walton Street. There for lunch, and again after the afternoon's walk or row, Robert came every day, while at the same time he enjoyed all the delights of living in college for his first three years, and could take his full share in College life. How completely he did this the following delightful reminiscences by his chief friend of those days, Mr. J. G. Milne of the Education Office, will sufficiently show. If there had been aloofness in his schooldays there was clearly none now, and though, as Mr. Milne records, he did not add to his literary leadership the honour of coxing the Corpus Eight (which the year before he went up had been head of the river), he won at least two 'pewters' as cox. in College 'fours.' Mr. Milne writes:

'Proctor and I went up to Oxford in the same year, and were both on the same staircase in the New Buildings at Corpus. But I have few recollections of him in the first year, apart from his library: and it was as a bookman that he was mainly known in the College. He very soon got a footing in the literary group of the period, which was a strong one; but he was not physically fitted to take a vigorous part in the sports. By his second year the men had discovered enough of his interests to realize that they

had in him an ideal candidate for the post of Junior Librarian; and he was elected accordingly by the College meeting to this office, which he held for the remainder of his undergraduate career. This was, in a way, an exceptional honour; for the tradition was that the Junior Librarianship should be held by a fourth-year man. The breach in the tradition, however, was a very fortunate one, as it resulted in the production of an excellent catalogue of the library. He had by this time become one of the members of a College society which accounted itself somewhat exclusive—the Pelican Essay Club: and shortly afterwards he, with one or two others—E. K. Chambers, I think, was his leading associate—formed a still more select society, known as the Owlets, which was composed in equal proportions of dons and undergraduates, and met to read English plays or selections from English literature on alternate weeks. I have now a list of the authors read in the first year of the Club's existence, which was sent me by Mrs. Proctor, who found it among his papers: and the evidence it gives of his taste in reading at this time may be interesting. His selections were from Tennyson (2), M. Arnold, Wm. Morris, Ruskin (5), Longfellow (2), Swinburne (2), Robt. Buchanan, Jas. Thomson (the younger), R. L. Stevenson (2), John Fletcher, and Froude.

‘I said above that he was physically unfitted to take much part in sports: but that did not mean that he neglected or despised this side of College life. Few were keener than he on the college boat, or more regular in their attendance at the riverside when there was any cheering to be done. He was very anxious to undertake the thankless duties of cox., and it was only after several trials that he reluctantly acknowledged that his shortness of sight prevented him from steering the boat to his satisfaction.

‘He was deeply interested in every kind of antiquarian research. Archaeology was at that time only beginning to find a place in the lecture-list at Oxford: and more than

once he and I—for we went to every available lecture in this subject—formed the whole of the audience for a term. One of his special lines of research was brasses, and he accumulated a large collection of rubbings. Partly with a view to antiquities he tramped the country for miles round Oxford. It was one of the Corpus customs at that time to turn out for a long tramp on Sunday, starting immediately after breakfast and returning in time for evening chapel—and we sought out all the nooks and corners of the neighbourhood on these occasions. Our favourite companion was H. D. Leigh, then Junior Tutor, who, like Proctor, has just been taken from us by death: he was an enthusiastic volunteer and student of military tactics, and taught us how to observe the lie of the country and explained the motives of the various campaigns which were fought round Oxford. He introduced us to the Kriegspiel Club, where we pursued these studies, and waged mimic warfare on many an evening. I remember the last night we had together there: we were both commanding on the same side, and had been set a problem drawn from the Wars of the Roses: we, as the Lancastrian force, instead of hurrying to London and meeting our doom at Barnet, fell upon the Yorkists at Northampton and crushed them.

‘One great occupation of our leisure time lay in the College library. We got leave to make a search through the old books, of which Corpus possesses a good collection, and see what we could find in the bindings. The result appeared in several hundreds of fragments, both manuscript and printed, including not a few of considerable interest. Proctor arranged them all, and at times we talked of preparing a catalogue: but unfortunately other work intervened; and, so far as I know, the only record of our finds is in a few stray notices which we published from time to time on points that specially took our fancy.

‘There was one side of his character which came out more strongly after he left Oxford—at any rate, it im-

pressed me more. I have referred to his choice of readings in the Owlets Club, which, as will be seen above, showed his partiality for Ruskin and William Morris: and he was, in many ways, a disciple of these two men, on the social and economic side as well as the artistic and aesthetic. He had a real and deep interest in their practical socialism, which is often called academic by the socialist of the street corner, who is unable to understand the altruistic desire of the intellectual man to elevate his fellows as contrasted with his own wish to drag everyone down to his own level. Proctor was constantly thinking out schemes for the improvement of life and its conditions; he was always ready to hear and inquire about the circumstances of the "East-Enders" amongst whom I work, and to suggest solutions for the problems arising there. The enthusiasm of humanity was the real ruling force of his character.'

Mr. Milne's narrative was much too interesting to be interrupted, but it has carried us rather far ahead, and we must retrace our steps to supplement it with some further notes kindly supplied by Mr. Arthur Sidgwick, the Fellow and Tutor by whom Proctor was prepared for Classical Moderations, in which he obtained an easy First. Mr. Sidgwick writes:

'When R. G. C. Proctor came into residence at Corpus in October, 1886, all that we knew of him was that he had done very good work in the Scholarship Examination some months before, and that he had been educated at Bath College, where his Headmaster, Mr. Dunn, had had a remarkable success in stimulating and developing the talents of his pupils. His work with me was from the first that of an unusually sound scholar: it was always regular, and most careful; and in particular was remarkably uniform in the high degree of excellence which it attained. His special talents always lay more in the love

of knowledge, and the persistent purpose and effort to make the best of the powers he possessed, than in the strictly literary aptitudes: and it was consequently all the more remarkable that he almost invariably reached a very high standard, not only in his mastery of the books which he read, but also in his classical composition, both prose and verse. I have an exact and complete record, as it happens, of all the work he did as my pupil, whether in the ordinary College course, or in the University examinations: and while there were others who surpassed him in natural literary gifts, Proctor was distinctly the best of his year in College, not only in the work he did for his tutors, but in the University examination of Honour Classical Moderations, in which he obtained a very good first class. He was also a most useful and energetic member of the College literary and discussion societies: and I have been present on more than one occasion when he showed a knowledge of subjects and books quite unusual in men of his age at the University. I have also been struck, as his friend and contemporary Mr. Milne has related, with the extent of the library which he had, even in his early days of residence at Oxford, collected in his rooms. And all his Oxford friends felt, when he was appointed to the post he held in the Museum, that his special talents had found their true scope. Though few may have anticipated the unique services which he rendered to learning in the special department which he studied, yet all agree in feeling that no success was ever more truly deserved, and in lamenting the deplorable fatality which cut short so valuable a life.'

For 'Greats' Proctor was prepared by Mr. H. D. Leigh, a distinguished scholar, whose premature death a little before that of his pupil prevents me from giving similar notes as to his work for that examination. This is a great loss, as part of the course of study for 'Greats' bears so directly on the

problems men have to face in after life that any information as to this stage of his development would have been peculiarly interesting. As a result of the examination Proctor was placed in the second class, but in at least one of his papers, that on his special subject, the 'topography of ancient Athens,' he greatly distinguished himself. The same unstinted liberality which had sent him up to Oxford with a library such as many dons might envy had provided the funds for a visit to Greece in which the topography of Athens was studied on the spot with all the eager enthusiasm subsequently transferred to far other themes, and the result was a paper on which the examiner was content to offer his respectful compliments. In the philosophical and historical part of the examination I can imagine that Proctor did not do so well. At least in after years whatever views he held on such subjects he expressed, if he expressed them at all, with considerable vehemence, and without much regard for the strong points of his opponent's case, and this mental attitude does not readily commend itself to examiners. Where some papers are strikingly good and others less so, the *vivâ voce* section of the Oxford examinations, ordinarily unimportant, becomes crucial, and an unfortunate mistake as to the day, which brought Proctor before the examiners fagged out by an all-night journey from the Lakes, may easily have cost him his First. If that would have brought him the very doubtful blessing of an Oxford Fellowship, he had no cause to regret the partial nature of his success. He had already in his College library found his true work, with which the rest of this paper will be oc-

cupied. Before passing to it, however, it must be noted that it is to this time, when he was just completing his University career, that the portrait belongs which forms the frontispiece to this memoir. This (with the leave of the original photographers, Messrs. Thorne of Oxford) has been enlarged by the skill of Mr. Emery Walker from a College group, in which, as President of the Owlets, Proctor was obliged to hold in his hand a small owl. The humorous look, with just a touch of defiance in it, is one which any of his more intimate friends must often have seen on his face, and makes the portrait delightfully characteristic, though his refusal, soon after this, to continue to be bothered with the trouble of shaving, gave him, in the eyes of casual observers, a very different appearance.

That two undergraduates should have had the freedom of the College library to the extent to which Proctor and his friend Mr. Milne enjoyed it at Corpus was doubtless in part due to the unusually happy relations between dons and undergraduates in that College, in part also to the zeal of the two workers. I gather that the responsible librarian was a little alarmed at the enthusiasm with which the fragments of printers' or binders' waste were extracted from the old bindings, and despite the extraordinarily interesting finds which have been made in book-covers there is much to be said on the librarian's side. Everything found at Corpus was carefully placed in boxes, and before Proctor left Oxford he had made for his college a complete list of its incunabula and also of its English books printed before the close of the sixteenth century.

It was apparently while Mr. Milne and Mr. Proctor were enjoying themselves at Corpus that the fame of their unusual pursuits reached the ears of Mr. Gordon Duff, who, the next time he passed through Oxford, asked them to dinner, and expounded bibliography to a doubtless devoutly impressed audience. To Proctor, who was anxious to take up some definite piece of bibliographical work, he suggested the press of John of Doesborgh, the Antwerp printer of several books for the English market, as a profitable subject for study, and the advice resulted in a paper in this magazine, and subsequently in the second of the illustrated monographs of the Bibliographical Society. It amuses the present writer now to remember that the paper for 'The Library' was sent to him by the editor for his opinion on it, and that he contributed a humble footnote to the first essay in bibliography of the man from whom afterwards he learnt so much.

When no more work remained to be done at Corpus Proctor naturally sought for fresh fields and found them at the Bodleian. As to this Mr. Nicholson, Bodley's Librarian, has kindly sent the following note:

'E. Gordon Duff had been doing for us a skeleton-catalogue of our incunabula, on alips, but had only got to the end of J when he left Oxford.

'Early in 1891 the Rev. C. Plummer, who was a Bodleian curator, mentioned Proctor as a suitable man to continue it. He was a don of Proctor's college, and that was doubtless how he came to know of Proctor's special bent.

'I thereon asked Proctor if he would care to do a little paid work of this sort for the library, and, finding his work so good, got him to undertake the completion of Duff's catalogue.

'The Duff-Proctor catalogue is of course arranged by counties, towns and presses, and is available for readers.

'Proctor also presented us with three volumes of note-books containing the matter described on the enclosed slips.

'He was also engaged for us in compiling from our general catalogue of printed books a rough list of British prae-1641 items. This is on the reference-shelves.

'The first and last days on which he worked for us were February 23, 1891, and some day in September, 1893, before Michaelmas.'

During the thirty-one months which separate the two dates Mr. Nicholson mentions Proctor must have catalogued upwards of three thousand incunabula on the fairly elaborate system of which we give a specimen in a note,¹ and written nearly ten thousand titles (including some cross references) for English books printed before 1641. He also found time to

¹ C. 1500. Paris. Alexander (Alyate) de Mediolano.

Auct. 6 Q. 6. 60.

Sulpitius (Jo.). De moribus puerorum c. commento.

fo. 1a: Carmen Inuenile de moribus mense. ¶ ¶ Johannis Sulpitii Urulani viri disertissimi de moribus puerorū scilicet in mensa feruandis. Carmen iuuenile paucis explanatum incipitur.

End fo. 6a, last line: apicem nostrum adiunctum finet. 6b: Apex Ascensianus de officio scholastici ¶ [Carmen: at end—] ¶ ¶ Finis ¶ (Alyate's mark. *Sikvestre* 1.)

6 leaves. Sig. A⁶. 1 column. Lines in col. irregular. 2 types (G 2 sizes) with headlines. fo. 2a 162 × 98 mm. (size of printed page). 4°. 7.2 × 4.7".

Woodcut initials. Printer's mark.

Half calf binding.

make lists, similar to those he had prepared for his own College, of the incunabula and earlier English books at New College, Brasenose, and All Souls' (incunabula only). At New College his explorations among bindings resulted in the discovery of some fragments on vellum of a previously unknown Caxton, the 'Donatus Melior' of Mancinellus. No doubt a little to his vexation at the time he did not identify these without the help of Mr. Hessels, a reminder that Rome is not built in a day, even when the builder has a special genius for his task. All these lists of incunabula were arranged in the chronological order of the countries, towns, presses and books, a plan the advantages of which were first shown by Henry Bradshaw, and of which he left specimens in his Lists of the Incunabula at the de Meyer, Culemann and Verzauwen sales. Proctor was thus already some way advanced towards the scheme of his great Index, while the contents of the three Note-Books, which, as mentioned by Mr. Nicholson, he presented to the Bodleian on finishing his work there, anticipate other of its features.

These three Note-Books are labelled as follows:

(1) The Printers of the Fifteenth Century: being a chronological clue to the arrangement of the Bodleian Catalogue of Incunabula. Showing also what printers are therein represented, and the reverse. With an alphabetical index of the Towns. 1893. (MS. Eng. Misc. E. 14.)

(2) A Brief Conspectus of the numbers of Ludwig Hain's Repertorium Bibliographicum which are in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. May, 1893. (R. 13. 58^b. 2 vols.)

(3) A Conspectus of the numbers of the 'Annales Typo-

graphiques' of Campbell which are in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. June, 1893. (R. 13. 58^b. Part of Vol. II.)

The 'chronological clue' of the first book answers of course to the lists of towns which come at the head of each country in the Index, and the lists of printers which come at the head of each town; while the second and third Note-Books practically cover the same ground as his second and third Tables.

During these years of work at Bodley, Mrs. Proctor and her son occupied a house at 10, St. Margaret's Road, Oxford. Their walking tours, which in Proctor's undergraduate days had taken them to Scotland, Belgium, and Norway, seem now to have been chiefly in the Eastern Alps.

Proctor entered the British Museum on October 16th, 1893, having obtained a nomination from Archbishop Benson, and competed successfully with the other nominees of the Principal Trustees. But though he entered thus in the ordinary way his reputation as a specialist had preceded him; and I remember asking Dr. Garnett rather dolefully as to whether he would absorb all the antiquarian work there was to do. As a matter of fact, though he escaped, I believe, the amusing drudgery of the copyright books, he took for some years his fair share of the general cataloguing; and recently, in helping to prepare for press the Supplement to the Catalogue, I have been struck by the very considerable number of titles written during the years 1894-1899, which are in his handwriting.

There was, however, no inclination at the Museum to allow his peculiar talents to remain unused.

Within quite a short time of his arrival it became the custom for the revisers of the General Catalogue, which had then reached the letter O, to bring him the old titles of fifteenth-century books to correct, and he was asked also himself to undertake the revision of any headings in which incunabula were especially numerous. It was on this ground that the very important heading 'Liturgies,' one of those which had been postponed on account of their complexity, was entrusted to him, and this remains the most notable of the strictly official tasks which he carried through. Numerous as are the fifteenth-century service-books in the British Museum they yet, of course, form but a small proportion of the whole; and the real difficulty of reforming the heading lay in the need for a greatly improved nomenclature and arrangement. In providing this he was greatly helped by Mr. Henry Jenner, who was thoroughly conversant with the books from their ecclesiastical side, and Mr. Jenner's sympathy with his new colleague's special gifts made Proctor, who had no love as a rule for working in collaboration, take a pleasure in seeking his help. During his last years at the Museum he took some part in preparing the Subject-Index of books acquired between 1881 and 1900; but by this time he was encouraged to devote himself almost entirely to his own special subject, with the results which are already well known. After Henry Bradshaw's death several of his letters to the official heads of the Museum were brought together for preservation; and in one of these there is a sentence (I quote from memory), as to how in bibliographi-

cal matters librarians all over the country looked up to the British Museum as their natural head. Coming from Henry Bradshaw, who was by far the greatest bibliographer England then possessed, the phrase seemed almost ironical, but as regards the first seventy years of the history of printing Proctor, from 1898 to his death, brought about its literal accomplishment. He gave it, in fact, an even wider range, since his help was sought, almost daily, by students in every part of Europe and also in the United States.

In the last sentence we have been looking at Proctor's position after he had published his Index; in 1893, when he came to the British Museum, he had published nothing save his article in 'The Library' on John of Doesborgh, and had still to make his name. Almost simultaneously with his appointment I had been elected honorary secretary of the Bibliographical Society, and was making plans for publishing 'Bibliographica'; and of course I was anxious to secure so promising a recruit. Proctor had held aloof from the Bibliographical Society in the first instance, but he now joined it in January, 1894, and was soon busily engaged in helping Mr. Redgrave to enlarge and improve the list of books printed by Erhard Ratdolt; a service for which, as for many others which he rendered the Society, he refused absolutely to allow any acknowledgment to be made. In June, 1894, the Council accepted his offer of a monograph on his old favourite, John of Doesborgh, and this appeared later in the year, with much more hard work put into it than the productions of that by no means distinguished printer were

really worth. He also contributed to the first number of 'Bibliographica' an article on the different forms of a woodcut of a master and pupils, bearing the inscription 'Accipies tanti doctoris dogmata sancta,' which appears in numerous books printed in Germany about the end of the fifteenth century. Our friendship by this time was fully established, and henceforth we worked so much together that I shall have some difficulty in keeping myself out of this memoir. The friendship was of a kind less uncommon, perhaps, than it may sound. On almost every subject on which it is possible to argue we held diametrically opposite views; but we had so many tastes and interests in common that we had never any time for controversy, but accepted each other quite happily, with a little occasional chaff, and only a very rare explosion when we had unguardedly strayed on a dangerous subject,—after which we went back to books. Thus to be admitted to Proctor's friendship was no light privilege. Not that he was at all chary of making friends, but that he brought to his friendships an affection, a generosity of estimate, a whole-heartedness, equally delightful and rare. The greatest pleasure you could give him was to allow him to take some burden off your shoulders on to his own, and whatever he undertook he always carried through with prompt decision.

The reputation which Proctor won by his 'Index' might have been in some degree anticipated by several years if he had been allowed to publish his notes of the Bodleian incunabula separately, as he had at first intended. The notes were all written

out and I had found a publisher for them, when it was intimated that the authorities at Bodley regarded these notes as inseparable from the work for which he had been paid, and the publication was dropped. The question was undoubtedly complicated by the fact that Mr. Duff, as well as Proctor, had worked at the Bodleian incunabula; but anyone who knew Proctor will know also that in matters of bibliography he would not have taken the results of an archangel upon trust, and the work he had put into this proposed Oxford Index made it really his own.

It was so much to the interest of the Bodleian to get a hand-list of its incunabula published for nothing, that if Proctor had paid the Curators the compliment of asking their permission it is very unlikely that any objection would have been raised. But anything in the nature of official authority (even when he had a real respect, or even affection, for the individual bearer of it) always disconcerted him, and he was apt to go his own way without the little 'by your leave,' for lack of which he had in this instance to turn back. Naturally he was somewhat downcast at the rebuff, especially as it made him fear similar trouble on the completion of the index to the incunabula at the British Museum, work for which had already begun. A more sophisticated friend suggested to him, however, that opposition would probably be disarmed if instead of providing each institution with a separate unofficial catalogue, he were to combine the two, thereby also producing his materials in a much more economical form. He was so delighted at the

suggestion that he exclaimed joyously, 'It *would* get my name up if I could do that'; a pleasantly frank avowal of an ambition which went straight for the highest mark, while it cared little or nothing for minor successes.

The way in which Proctor set about the preparation of his Museum Index was eminently characteristic. His Bodleian notes applied mainly to the fifteenth century. For this period the titles of all the books in the Museum had for many years been carefully kept together. By using these titles he could have got straight to work. Instead of this he kept the period 1500-1520 steadily before him from the first, and made his own collection of titles by no less arduous a process than that of reading through the whole General Catalogue of the British Museum, of which hundreds of volumes at that time still remained in manuscript, while in the printed volumes he had to take account also of the accessions pasted on the other half of the page. Day after day, as soon as four o'clock came, he would go straight to the Catalogue-desk, and read one volume after another, until at last he had noted down on small cards the short titles, imprints and press-marks of all books attributed in the Catalogue to the period with which he was concerned. The cards were then sorted out according to countries, towns, and presses, with a large section of 'adespota,' and the work of comparison and description of types went steadily forward.

Proctor had been one of the earliest purchasers of the Kelmscott Press books, and in October, 1894, first at the Museum and afterwards at Kelmscott

House made the personal acquaintance of William Morris, who quickly appreciated his wide knowledge of the old books which they both loved. It was fortunate that by this time Morris (though keeping all his ideals) had found out that neither the Democratic Federation nor the Socialist League offered a royal road to progress, and was tired of 'bailing out' not always very reputable 'comrades.' Had Proctor known him in his militant period, he too would have taken his share in 'Bloody Sunday,' and for an official of the British Museum to have been had up for obstructing the police might have led to trouble. As it was, his admiration for Morris brought nothing but happiness into his life, which it increasingly influenced during these last ten years, leading him, as we shall see, to become an active committee member of the 'Anti-Scrape' (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings), to take up the study of the Icelandic Sagas, and, finally, to start the Greek printing, of which the first fruits will appear within a few weeks of this memoir. For the present, however, he devoted himself solely to his incunabula, and in 1895 printed for private distribution two tracts on 'Early Printing,' followed by a third in 1897. In the first of these a 'List of the founts of type and woodcut devices used by the printers of the Southern Netherlands in the fifteenth century' (dedicated to Mr. Jenkinson) he did for the Belgian printers the same service as Bradshaw had rendered to the Dutch; the second, 'A Note on Eberhard Frommolt, of Basel, printer,' showed that Frommolt worked at Vienne and had relations with Johannes Solidi, while

the third provided a typographical index to the four supplements to Campbell's 'Annales de la Typographie Néerlandaise,' with descriptions of additional books not known to Campbell. In 1897 Proctor prepared for the Bibliographical Society at Dr. Garnett's suggestion, 'A Classified Index to the Serapeum,' and also gave yeoman's help with the bibliography attached to Dr. Haebler's monograph on 'The Early Printers of Spain and Portugal.' He was so interested, indeed, in Spanish printing that he wrote full descriptions of the hundred or more Spanish incunabula in the British Museum, subsequently making a present of his work to Dr. Haebler, who has utilized it in his 'Typographie Ibérique.' By 1898 he had at last, by the use of nearly all his leisure for more than four years, completed his great work, 'An Index to the Early Printed Books in the British Museum: from the invention of printing to the year MD, with notes of those in the Bodleian Library,' and this was published during 1898, in four parts, by Messrs. Kegan Paul and Co., in an edition of 350 copies. Of the merits of this Index there is no need to write at any length. I think it was Baer of Frankfurt who first gave the author the pleasure of seeing a 'Proctor number' quoted side by side with that of Hain, and by now the practice has become general in all important catalogues, and greatly facilitates the task of acquiring fresh incunabula for the British Museum. For a book of the kind, offering no attractions whatever either to the stockbroker or the dilettante, the sale was fairly rapid, about half the edition being disposed of by the end of the first

year, and the demand steadily continuing, though checked, as is often the case, by the belief that the book was already out of print. In the risk of the book Proctor had shared to the extent of £50, but this was never asked for, and after a little time he began to receive small annual cheques on account of royalties.

The appearance of the Index naturally stirred the Trustees of the British Museum to demand that their talented assistant should prepare for them a full-dress catalogue of their incunabula. From this he persistently shrank, having no great love, as he explained in his review of Dr. Voullième's book in our last volume, for bibliographical descriptions, which have really very little to do with the history of typography, wherein his own interests centred. He gladly, however, undertook, as a preliminary to the Catalogue, a rearrangement on the same historical lines as his Index, of all the Museum incunabula, with the exception of those in the Grenville and King's Libraries, which cannot be separated from the collections to which they belong. On this rearrangement he was engaged up to his last day at the Museum, the progress of the work being very slow owing to the need for devising an elaborate system of press-marks into which accessions could be intercalated, to the number of tract volumes which had to be broken up and their component parts rebound in order that each might occupy its own place, to the innumerable reference boards which had to be written to keep the books available for readers, and to the physical difficulties of dealing with so many volumes of different sizes,

some of them immensely unwieldy. The American doctrine that a thousand-dollar man ought never to waste his time on a hundred-dollar job was not one which appealed to Proctor. He liked to do everything himself, carrying about the heavy books, and steering them skilfully on Museum barrows, and making all the necessary changes in the shelving with his own hands. He calculated that about another year would see the work ended, and it is hoped that this reckoning may still prove accurate, though in this, as in everything else, those who are trying to carry out his plans, find themselves obliged to proceed hesitatingly and cautiously, where he knew exactly what he meant to do and how he meant to do it.

As soon as his fifteenth-century index was complete Proctor set to work on the continuation to 1520, of which the German section was published within a few weeks of his death. He allowed me, however, to tempt him now and again to take up other smaller subjects, and to one of these in which we worked together for ten weeks in a constant excitement, we both always looked back with special pleasure. It was known during the course of 1898 that Dr. Garnett's long career at the British Museum was drawing to a close, and I had talked lazily with Proctor of how pleasant it would be to present him with some record of the many fine books he had secured for the Museum during his Keepership. On January 11th, 1899, I heard that for domestic reasons Dr. Garnett intended to retire on the 20th of the following March. In the intervening sixty-eight days, without any printed circular, two hundred

subscribers were obtained, the 'Three Hundred Notable Books' were picked out from the annual reports, described and annotated, sixty illustrations were made, Dr. Garnett was guilefully led to consent to sit to Mr. Strang for the etched portrait which forms the frontispiece, the book was set up and printed, and a copy specially bound by Zaehnsdorf was taken into the Keeper's Room at 11 a.m. on March 20th, by two very triumphant Assistants. Of course, when we told them why we were in a hurry, printer, photographer, artist and binder all flew round, but without Proctor's powers of amazingly rapid and yet accurate work, though the other partner by a miracle had doubled or even trebled his own rate of progress, the result would never have been achieved.

The next by-path to which Proctor was led during this period grew out of the valuable little note on 'An Incunabulum of Brescia hitherto ascribed to Florence,' contributed by Mr. R. C. Christie to the Transactions of the Bibliographical Society for 1898. The acquaintance which this showed with Greek printing led the Society's Secretary to beg Mr. Christie to write a monograph on the subject, and when that delightful scholar, after playing a little with the idea, was obliged to decline it on the score of ill-health, the burden was transferred to Proctor's shoulders, and resulted in the admirable monograph on 'The Printing of Greek in the Fifteenth Century,' published in December, 1900.

At the beginning of this year Proctor had started, with a carefully restricted membership of fifty, his

Type Facsimile Society for publishing collotype reproductions of pages in rare books printed in unusual founts. Mr. Duff first, and afterwards Mr. Sydney Cockerell acted as Treasurer of the Society, but save for the collection of members' subscriptions and paying bills with the proceeds, the whole work of the Society was in Proctor's hands, and with the enthusiastic help of Mr. Hart of the Clarendon Press he gave his subscribers a wonderful return for the £50 a year which they placed at his disposal.

In May of this same year Proctor had begun to attend the weekly committees of the 'Anti-Scrape,' rendered the more joyous by subsequent suppers at Gatti's, the good company at which he thoroughly enjoyed. A little later, on the regretted death of Mr. F. S. Ellis, he was honoured by the request to take his place as one of the trustees under the will of Morris, and though with some qualms as to his business qualifications, gladly accepted. As a matter of fact I believe that his business qualifications in this capacity proved excellent, while his judgment and knowledge of book-production were called into requisition in seeing through the press new editions of Morris's works, more especially the Golden Type supplementary edition of the books not printed by Morris himself.

It was about this time that Proctor began studying in the original the Icelandic Sagas, many of which Morris had helped to translate. This new interest resulted shortly before his death in the publication through the Chiswick Press of a version of the famous 'Laxdæla-Saga,' which is still purchasable (10s. 6d.). His first rendering from the Icelandic,

however, was 'The Tale of the Weaponfirthers,' which he caused Constable of Edinburgh to print for him in March, 1902, and presented to his friend Mr. Jenkinson in a charming binding, as a wedding gift, after the Italian fashion. Rightly or wrongly, I think Proctor's translations from the Icelandic only partly successful, but the Latin preface and the English verses in his wedding volume are both so admirably turned that (the book itself being inaccessible to most readers) I have obtained leave to quote them here.

'F. J. sponsalia agenti salutem ac felicitatem optat summam R. P.

'Audire te uideor, uir amicissime, libellulo tibi ante oculos posito, qui dicis: Quid mihi cum hoc? hoc nuptiarum quid interest, rei omnium suauiusimae tenerrimaeque quid gesta boreali ex orbis terrarum regione quadam rapta, mortis plena, horrida dolore, ferorum adpetitus hominum enarrantia? ego uero quid respondeam ipse plane nescio; namque historia (ut fatear) nullo modo ὑμίναιος ni forte sit ἱπινύων: haec mihi tantum subit consolatio; nempe cum sit omnium humanissima res matrimonium, humani nihil a se alienum putare debeat; uitae uero hic uim adesse, immo circumfluere quis est qui neget? talis ergo defensionis prima acies. secundo contendam non sine utilitate fieri ut optima quaeque per contraria sua illustrentur. tertio denique considerandum aliquid me multo durius adferre potuisse. an iucundius foret exempla quaeuis artis libros elixe describendi impressos, quemadmodum Iacobus ille regius libris manu scriptis sese inuoluit profiteri? uel malles modo decertationem de systemate signaturae mentelinano, modo inuectiuam more gallico floribus uituperationis selectis ornatam in Appium Claudinum nostrum, qui bibliopola libros amat atque fouet, senex ingentia conflata uolumina? haud equidem credo: haec igitur tanquam

de horreo meo exiguo spicula pusilla licet et inuenusta deprompsi: quae tibi ut maiorem quam mihi praebeant uoluptatem identidem opto atque deprecor. sed haec hactenus; tu uero ut cum coniuge tua iure amantissima bene ualeas cura.

‘Dabam Londini ipso die Valentini, episcopi et martyris, anno minoris computationis secundo.’

The sportive bibliographical allusions will probably puzzle many readers (to explain them in notes would spoil the jokes), but it is not many men who a dozen years after they had taken their degree could put so much humour and grace into a Latin letter, and yet, as far as I can remember, Proctor had had nothing to keep his Latin prose from rusting. His English verse strikes me as equally happy, the allusion in the opening couplet being to certain natural history pursuits, with which Mr. Jenkinson diversifies his classics and bibliography :

‘Friend, whose acute yet unobtrusive eye
Rejoices to detect the two-winged fly,
And swift to pierce the book’s disguises through
Ne’er fails to mark each blind elusive clue;
Can I be laggard, now that April’s green,
In paying tribute to the Meadow’s Queen,
Should it but lie unheeded at her feet.

‘Jesting and grave words, bitter lines or sweet
Endlessly life engrosses page by page;
Nor might yon arctic island’s bygone age
Know less than we the secret solacement,
Ill hap to soften and increase content:
No fainter gleam the colours wrought of old,
Spike-Helgi’s pride, the lust of power and gold,
Or Halli’s wailful glory o’er his dead
New-fallen when kin met kin by Eyvindstead.

‘ May we not hear it beat, the pulse of life,
 As Bjarni still, through stratagem and strife,
 Renounces victory gained by aught but love?
 Great-hearted deeds that generous spirits move
 Attuned to catch them through the mist of years;
 Rough simple lives, so lightly lost and won;
 Eld’s dream-wrought visions boding clash of spears;
 The long drear winter empty of the sun;

‘ Such fill the tale; its blended hopes and fears
 Tread on the skirts of sorrow; then again
 Eager springs pleasure from the cease of pain:
 Wherefore to-day, that shall your joy fulfil,
 Accept no less, in token of goodwill—
 Rude though it be for fancy’s following—
 This hardy floweret of the northern spring.’

Proctor took no pleasure in writing English prose; it was a trouble to him, and he could not always make his points in it quite clearly. But I think these stanzas show that he possessed in no slight degree the power of using verse to express thoughts and feelings a little warmer and deeper than plain prose will easily bear. It is a very enviable gift, more especially when joined, as in his case, with a complete absence of any desire to be reckoned a candidate for even the smallest poetic honours.

These two Icelandic translations, as has already been noted, undoubtedly grew out of the admiration for the work of William Morris which was so powerful a factor in Proctor’s later activities. To the same cause, with the added impulse derived from his own studies in the history of Greek printing, must be attributed the endeavour to improve Greek types which led him in the last year of his

life to adapt an early sixteenth-century Spanish fount to modern use. Though he fixed on it quite independently, the fount he chose was an old favourite of my own, on which, some time before I knew him, I had written an article in the *Century Guild Hobby Horse*, which had had something to do with Mr. Selwyn Image's earlier essay in Greek type making. Though first used, by way of trial, in a thin quarto, the original type was designed for the New Testament in the Complutensian Polyglot, and I have always believed that it was based on the handwriting of the ancient manuscript which, as mentioned in the preface, the Pope sent to Cardinal Ximenes to help him in the preparation of his text. As the manuscript itself (so it is said) was utilized in the eighteenth century for making rockets, this conjecture can never be verified, but the type undoubtedly goes back to the fine Greek writing of the tenth century, just as the best Roman types go back to the Carolingian minuscules as revived during the Italian renaissance. It is thus strongly distinguished from the unhappy cursive types popularized by Aldus, and possesses all the qualities of a book-hand in which those are so markedly lacking. Unfortunately in the type he designed for Messrs. Macmillan, Mr. Selwyn Image had introduced modifications and compromises which completely altered its character. Proctor, on the other hand, accepted it in its entirety, but as in its original form it possessed no upper-case letters, he was obliged to design these himself. In this he was, on the whole, remarkably successful, and certainly deserved to be so, as he spared himself no

trouble in the matter. He was equally zealous in facing the great difficulty of all Greek printing, the connection of accents and breathings with the letters to which they belong, and here also he succeeded very well. After much deliberation he asked his friend Mr. Jacobi, of the Chiswick Press, to be his printer, and on May 12th, 1903, a four-page fly-sheet, containing his device (an otter), an Athenian 'psephisma,' and a sportive colophon, was printed as a specimen of his majuscules. Among the papers on his table at the Museum which awaited his return were clean sheets of the greater part of the 'Agamemnon' of Aeschylus, with proofs for the beginning of the Choephoroi. These, with the Eumenides, all three in a text which he himself had revised, were to form the first book printed with his type. When all hope of his safety had to be given up, the supervision of the proofs was very kindly undertaken by Dr. F. G. Kenyon, and the book is now almost ready for issue. It is hoped that it may be followed by Homer's Odyssey and the Idylls of Theocritus, of both of which Proctor had made ready a text. His own intention was to accompany these with a Greek romance, a liturgical book, and a selection of modern Greek ballads and lyrics. But he had made less progress in the preparation of these, and the difficulty of finding editors, and perhaps also readers, for them, will probably prove insuperable.

When Mrs. Proctor and her son left Oxford, they rented a house for some years in Pelham Road, Wimbledon, moving thence in 1898 to Oxshott, some twelve miles further out, where they had built themselves a house. By subsequent purchases nearly

two acres of land were added to this, and the planting the little domain with trees, and otherwise cultivating it, proved a great source of pleasure, while Proctor's cleverness with his fingers found an outlet in making hangings for the house and doing other bits of carpentry and upholstery. Though Mrs. Proctor was now over seventy, the walking tours still continued, till in 1902 an unusually successful one decided them not to risk spoiling the memory of their long series of holidays by attempting another in the exact form. In the early summer of 1903 the two went together to Corsica and Florence. For the later walking tour in Tirol, Proctor started by himself on the evening of August 29th. I was in France at the time, and as usual had laid on him the burden of my whole correspondence, and just before leaving England he wrote me a long letter giving an account of his stewardship, and confessing to feeling a little tired. As soon as he reached Tirol, where they had previously walked together, he began writing daily to his mother, telling how he was getting on in their old haunts. On September 5th he posted from St. Leonhard in the Pitzthal a delightful tourist letter, with a touch of sadness in it because he had no longer his wonted companion, but otherwise buoyant and happy. He had sent on his bag to Steinach by rail, would sleep that night at the Taschach-hut, eight thousand feet up, and start walking from there. As he would be out of the reach of the post, he should not be able to write again for some days. His whole trip was planned to last only just three weeks, and he was due back at the British Museum

on September 22nd. He did not arrive that day, and I thought that he had prolonged his leave. On the 23rd I heard from Mrs. Proctor, saying that no letter had arrived from him since that of September 5th. Two days later his colleague, Mr. R. A. Streatfeild, the best possible man for the task, started to search for him in the Taschach district, where at request of the Foreign Office the Austrian police had already ordered inquiries to be made. Mr. Streatfeild traced him to the Taschach-hut and found his name written there in the visitors' book. He had talked to the custodian about the further hut to which he was walking, but this second hut he never reached, nor could the most diligent inquiry hold out any hope of his having made his way to any other place instead.

Such are the bare facts, nor is there need for much commentary on them. Proctor's habit of moving on to a fresh place every day prevented him from being missed during the few hours when search might have been profitable. Long ere there was justification (in view of his warning that he should not be writing again for some days) for the slightest anxiety on the part of his friends in England, the weather had broken, snow had fallen, and all search had become impossible.

In starting by himself from the Taschach-hut Proctor broke the primary rule of Alpine climbing, that no snow glacier should ever be attempted save in parties of three, but we may not praise and blame a man for the self-same qualities, and the absolute disregard of difficulties and craving to meet them unaided in his own way which brought him to his

death at thirty-five on the Taschach, were precisely the same features in his character which had made him face undaunted the task of describing every fount of type used in Europe up to 1520, and read through the catalogue of the British Museum as a preliminary. Nor for him, though deeply for themselves, need those who loved him lament. His eager, untiring energies could not long have survived the rate at which they were burning away, and he himself had calmly faced the certainty that he could only hope for a few more years of effective eyesight. If the snow-mountains are rapacious of the victims whom their charm allures, they are also merciful, and the crevasses which kill so quickly and so painlessly offer almost the only grave on which the imagination can dwell without horror. Like Browning's Grammarian Proctor had spent his life in the investigation of *minutiae* for which the world cares nothing, certain that he was right in doing it, and that it was worth doing. To those who were in sympathy with him it is a real alleviation of their grief to know that he, too, found his last resting-place among the mountains.

In another article I hope to quote some of the appreciations of Proctor's work by M. Delisle and other foreign scholars, also to consider, as practically as may be, the possibility of completing the second section of his great Index. But here, for the present, I must stop.

ALFRED W. POLLARD.