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BEQUEST OF GABRIEL WELLS

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GABRIEL WELLS, Honorary Litt.D., Rutgers, 1935, died on November 6, 1946, in New York City. He was born in Balassa-Gyarmat, Hungary, on January 24, 1862, and migrated to America more than fifty years ago. He subsequently became an internationally known and respected figure in the work of rare books and manuscripts.

Dr. Wells' specialty was the buying and selling of fine items. He undoubtedly sold more copies of the First Folio of Shakespeare than any other American dealer. He disposed of original autograph manuscripts of Dickens, Pope, Kipling, Keats, Balzac, and Hardy; and he sold the finest collection of Washington letters as well as the original Charter of Liberties granted by William Penn to the people of Pennsylvania. His margin of profit was often slim, for he took great pleasure in having a rarity go to a certain collector or institution rather than to the highest bidder, as his gifts to the British Museum, the Library of Congress, and various American university libraries amply prove.

His fame, however, will probably rest upon his publishing enterprises. Endowed with broad vision and deep integrity, he successfully placed before the reading public the literary works of outstanding writers in beautiful and durable formats. In place of the inferior subscription sets then available, readers were given the opportunity to purchase splendid complete editions of such authors as O. Henry, Anatole France, Mark Twain, and Oscar Wilde—to mention but four of the scholarly texts which have been in continuous demand throughout the years.



Gabriel Wells was the Honorary President of the Associated Friends of the Library of Rutgers University since its formation in 1937. In addition to a number of gifts which he sent to the Library from time to time, he bequeathed to Rutgers the following books and manuscripts valued at ten thousand dollars:

1. Justinus, Marcus Junianus. *Epitoma in Trogi Pompeii historias*. Venice, 1479.
2. Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. London, 1590 (Part I); 1596 (Part II). Riviere & son binding.
3. Jonson, Benjamin. *The workes of Benjamin Jonson*. London, 1616 (Vol. I); 1640 (Vol. II).
4. Shakespeare, William. *The excellent history of the Merchant of Venice*. [London] 1600 [1619].
5. [Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de] *The history of Don-Quichote*. [Translated by Thomas Shelton] London, 1620. 2 vols.
6. [Purchas, Samuel] *Purchas his pilgrimes*. London, 1625-1626. 5 vols. Riviere & son binding.
7. Herrick, Robert. *Hesperides*. London, 1648.
8. Shakespeare, William. *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, and tragedies*. London, 1632. The second folio. Riviere & son binding.
9. Mather, Cotton. *Magnalia Christi Americana*. London, 1702.
10. [Pope, Alexander] *An essay on man*. London [1733-1734].
11. Sterne, Laurence. *A sentimental journey through France and Italy*. London, 1768. 2 vols. Riviere & son binding.
12. Boswell, James. *The life of Samuel Johnson*. London, 1791. 2 vols.
13. [Lamb, Charles] *Elia*. London, 1823.
14. [Lamb, Charles] *The last essays of Elia*. London, 1833.
15. Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The scarlet letter*. Boston, 1850.
16. Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick*. New York, 1851.
17. Grant, Ulysses S. "General Grant to General McPherson; original autograph letters and telegrams, December 5, 1862-December 1, 1863."