

## LAST WORDS

Browsing among university library journals, bulletins, and quarterlies recently, the editor of this *Journal* culled a few ideas to pass on to the Friends of the Library. There is no avoiding the fact, of course, that the libraries that have the richest accessions have the most interesting material to draw upon, but when the purpose is to display the interest that may inhere in the library's holdings old and new for readers and friends, the rare folio or illuminated manuscript may not be necessary as the basis for an article. The *Colby Library Quarterly* for February, 1951, for instance, has built a fascinating feature upon a study of the first and subsequent editions of what was, until the present century at least, probably one of the most popular poems in the English language, Gray's *Elegy*. The *raison d'être* was the bicentenary of the "Elegy."

The *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, an always interesting quarterly, gave up one whole issue last winter to the Wordsworth Centennial. The following number was devoted to an exhibition entitled "Shapers of the Modern Novel," a display, partly from loans, of manuscripts and first editions of Conrad, Hemingway, Mann, Joyce, Lewis, Proust, Faulkner, Gide, plus Marx and Freud.

Harvard and Yale, with their plenitude of materials, can afford to ignore routine acquisitions and exhibitions and devote their pages to such general articles as "Thomas Wolfe at Harvard" (*Harvard Library Bulletin*, Summer and Autumn, 1950), or "Theodore Dreiser as I knew Him," by Carl Van Vechten (*Yale University Library Gazette*, Jan. 1951).

The staple of most library journals, however, is the article based on some rare book or collection or group of manuscripts in what is frequently called the "Special Collections." The descriptive articles on the Symington Collection, and on the Gide and Swinburne letters in that collection in recent issues of the *Rutgers Journal* are representative. Another type of article to which this *Journal* has devoted a great deal of space since its beginning is the actual scholarly editing of unpublished manuscript material and letters in the possession of the Library. It is the theory of the present editor that when this material is interesting enough in itself, and not so extensive or so important as to be better adaptable to book publication, it is a legitimate function of the *Journal* to give it to the public with sufficient notes and editorial commentary to show its proper significance.

L.A.M.