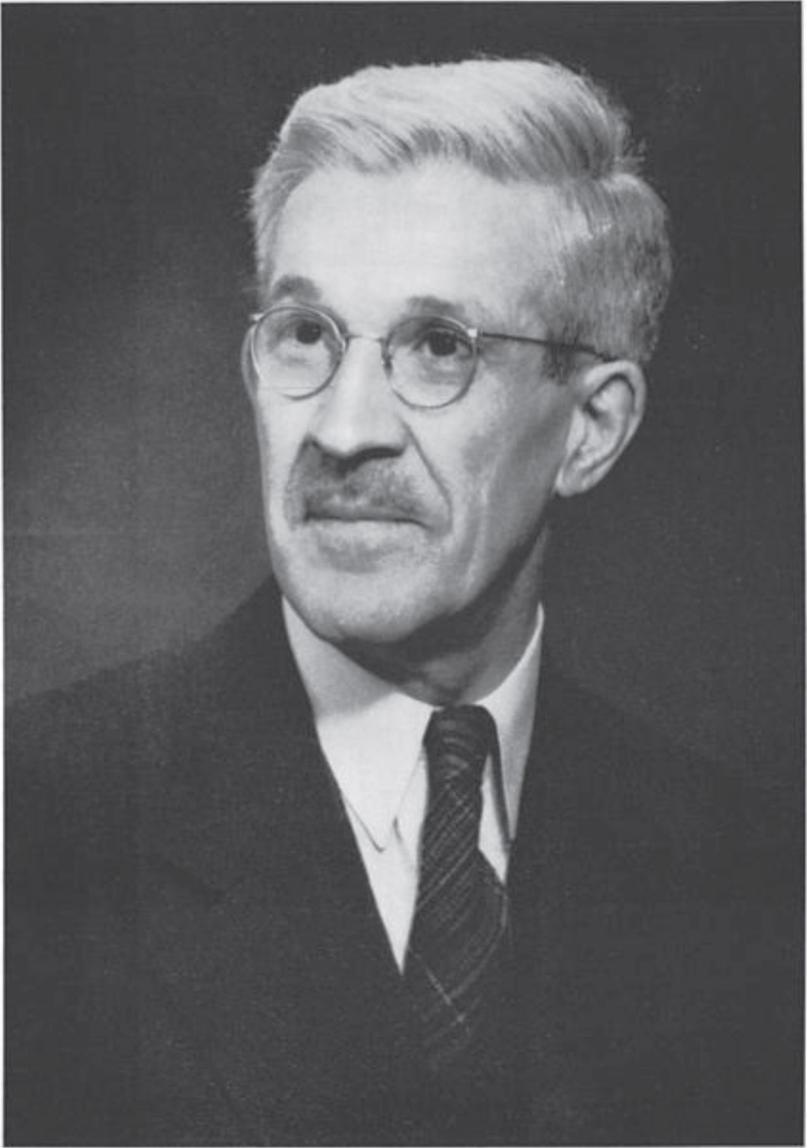


EXHIBITS

In memory of Professor C. Rexford Davis, who died August 5, 1957, the Library exhibited during the months of October and November its collection of material relating to William Cobbett. Although Professor Davis was best known for his philological studies and his grammar textbooks, he had become interested in Cobbett in recent years and was engaged in a definitive bibliography of writings by and about Cobbett at the time of his death. He had worked tirelessly for the past five years gathering Cobbett material for the Library, to the extent that our collection is now one of the finest in the country. It includes nearly four hundred published items by and about Cobbett, and many manuscripts. Furthermore, Professor Davis's interest in the field of Cobbett's life and times produced collections of material about the reform movement in England, the trial of Queen Caroline, and other related topics.

One can easily see why Professor Davis became interested in Cobbett. Besides the challenge of the difficult bibliographical problem he presented, the life and character of the man Cobbett was intensely interesting. He was a patriot and a reformer, a man of the people, and an extremely able, virile, writer. His life was adventurous, and, through his outspoken criticism of the English government before Reform, Cobbett managed to antagonize an amazingly large number of people. Throughout his life he jeopardized his livelihood and freedom in defense of his right to publish the truth as he saw it, and on two occasions he paid heavily for his presumption. His publications and those of his detractors are equally violent and absorbing. Thus the nucleus of the exhibit was a "Life of Cobbett" by James Gillray, the political caricaturist, who was an avowed enemy of Cobbett and Reform. The "Life" is an imaginative corruption of Cobbett's autobiographical writings, illustrated with broadly satiric colored plates. In the exhibit these thrusts were countered with samples of Cobbett's own writings and those of his partisans, allowing the viewer to draw his own conclusions about his real character.

One section of the exhibit dealt with Professor Davis's contribution to Cobbett scholarship. It included the articles written by Professor Davis about Cobbett and selections from his bibliography of Cobbett



Professor C. Rexford Davis
1896-1957

in progress at the time of his death. All of the material typified the painstaking care and creative scholarship which Professor Davis invested in everything he did. He had examined every important library in the United States for Cobbett material and, working with university grants, had obtained hundreds of microfilms and photostats of Cobbett's writings. Only the foreign holdings remained to be examined before this most difficult bibliographical problem was to be solved. The three manuscript volumes displayed in the exhibit represent a trunkful of material and years of effort. They are an important contribution to English scholarship, but the death of the man who was to complete them is irreparable.

OTHER EXHIBITS

With the increased exhibit space available in the New Jersey Room and in the lobby of the new Library, it was possible during the past six months to display several exhibits concurrently. Because of that we were able to vary from our regular exhibit schedule to insert material of timely interest. This was done on three occasions, the memorial exhibit of Cobbett material in October and November, an exhibit of Asian-American material to celebrate the sixth UNESCO Asian-American Conference in November, and an exhibit of some wood sculptures by Patrocínio Barela during the months of December and January. There were several other scheduled exhibits since June. Two Rutgersensia exhibits were displayed, one for Commencement featuring pictorial materials of several graduating classes, and one for September entitled "The Old and the New at Rutgers." Samples of the Library's large collection of Defoe material were displayed during August and September, along with a smaller display of manuscript material dealing with a typical colonial New Jersey family, the Van Kouwenhovens. For the holidays the Library drew upon its large collection of cookbooks, menus, and general vinctural and gastronomical works (largely from the Jack Kriendler Memorial Collection) for a "Wine and Food Cookery" exhibit.