

WORK OF ANTHONY H. EUWER

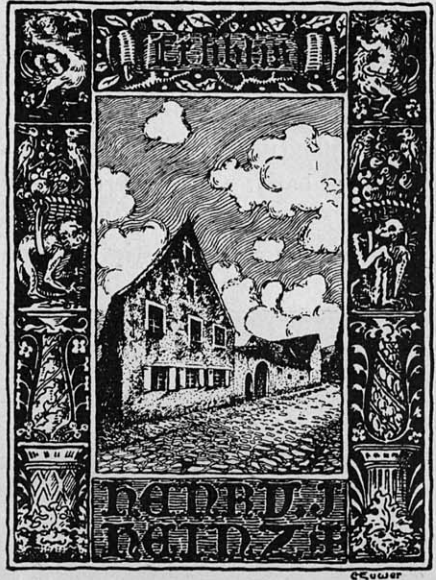
THE WORK OF ANTHONY H. EUWER—AN APPRECIATION. BY WILL LARRYMORE SMEDLEY

IT is not my intention in treating my present subject to be analytical, but rather to bring more prominently before the public, work of merit which deserves much praise: the work of one whose



sincere and indefatigable energy has won for him an enviable success.

To assemble numerous lines and surfaces in a mass that resembles a picture puzzle, is one thing; to make a real bookplate is another. An indiscriminate mixture of free-hand geometry, conforming more or less to prescribed conventional forms cannot necessarily be termed a design. It might more properly be called a carefully planned accident. The truth of this statement is easily proven by the fact that much is done in the way of so-called design by many who



are not actuated by any artistic impulse—as all good work must be, whether conventional or otherwise—but who are straining every nerve and muscle to reach the limits of the unusual. This is not true of Mr.



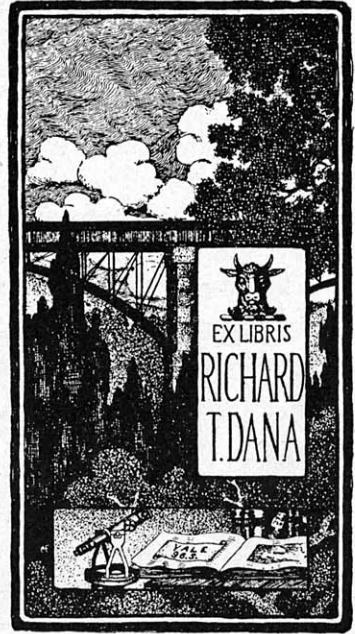
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Euwer's work, for in every case in which his own idea has had free play, the result has been comprehensive and effectual; the artistic in each case, being able to take care of itself. Simplicity is a rare quality; and only a skilful hand, a capacity (not enthusiasm only) for color, careful thought, and an intuitive sense of the artistic, are capable



of creating from a chaos of material a design that shall show beauty and proportion.

Turning more directly to the subject in hand, one would think that the ideal bookplate should, in some way, indicate the nature of the owner's occupation and, if he be so fortunate as to possess a genuine coat of



arms, that this could be used incidentally with excellent effect. But here two difficulties present themselves: some persons would desire so much of their occupation to be shown that the plate would be a purely business advertisement; while others would insist on the coat of arms only; thus making the



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family virtue appear vulgar by its constant recurrence. However, dictation is not our



object. The personal taste of the prospective owner should play the principal part in the matter of the material to be used.

Although the bookplate was, originally, armorial in character, a coat of arms itself is not an especially tempting subject to a modern designer, since the devices which it contains have a definite significance and



must be used unaltered, in order to preserve its intrinsic value; thus the artist must strictly adhere to certain forms in working out his design. However, that arms may be made to take a fitting place in the general scheme is proven in the Abbott plate, in which the armorial bearings enter harmoniously into the design, without being too evident. The fact that there was, in the sixteenth century, an eminent divine of this

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name, who was an ancestor of the present owner, gives rise to a slight play on the word, and the whole idea is well bound with an appropriate border formed by a Gothic arch.

In the Heinz plate, there seems to have been an understanding which resulted in a very effective design. The border does not obtrude itself, while the interior has the very agreeable effect of an old wood engraving. In the plate of John Fremont and Margaret Magee Steel, we have an ornament of quiet dignity surrounding the Titian masterpiece, St. Christopher. In the plate of Lawrence Crane Woods there is involved not only the name of the owner, but also the legend of the cranes of



Ibycus, as recalled by the Greek motto: *Ποι ητων ἀμύντωρ* Not often does a name or motto lend itself so happily to pictorial treatment. In the Dana plate I am sure that the artist did not have entirely his own way. The owner apparently is an engineer, and, as science deals with things as they are, and art with relative appearances, there was sufficient occasion for trouble. A glance at the several objects involved is enough to convince that a railroad bridge, a transit, and a bull's head are not things of great artistic possibilities; still, the several elements have grown into their places, and the result is much better than one could, at first, expect; the bull's head remaining the one jarring note which is not overcome by a variety of good pen work on the rest of the

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both Berger and Daniel Putnam Brinley. They are similar subjects, similar in treatment, and yet possessing a very pleasing difference: a proof that monotony is no part of Mr. Euwer's work, and also of the converse that spontaneity is an essential element of success.

In the plate of John Kendrick Bangs, we have a design of delightful bookish flavor, somewhat in the Renaissance style. The whole idea is agreeably balanced and suggests a place in which to spend a comfortable time with one's own books. The composition is strong in value and the decorative quality is good, without being overdone.

The other plates, which have not been lettered, are a few of the artist's latest and best works; being so well composed and executed as to make comment upon them unnecessary. The originals of the Sunlit Tower and the Maiden with the Mandolin are done

plate. The plates of Philo Nelson French and Clara Winters are good studies in relative values, and the latter will bear more than a second glance.

In the plate of Mary Effingham Chatfield, an unhampered and somewhat pictorial scheme, a pleasant relation exists between the body of the plate and the border. The little princess of the wood has laid aside her book to dream of a gallant knight, and of the wonderful castle, as suggested in the distance. This plate, as well as some of the later ones, including "The Princess and Peacocks," "The Stork Maiden," "The Sunlit Tower" with its dragon border, and the "Girl with the Mandolin," are truly *chateaux en Espagne*.

A note of humor is introduced in the Carter plate, in which the old man unconsciously grips the *stein* as he reads, with a thought perhaps of the jug behind the chair. Of quite another type are the plates of Eliza-



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in opaque water color, and to convey an adequate idea of the color scheme would be quite impossible. These newer designs bear evidence of entire originality: that is, they do not appear to be hampered by suggestions, or dictations from a possible purchaser; the conception being free to develop without limitations.

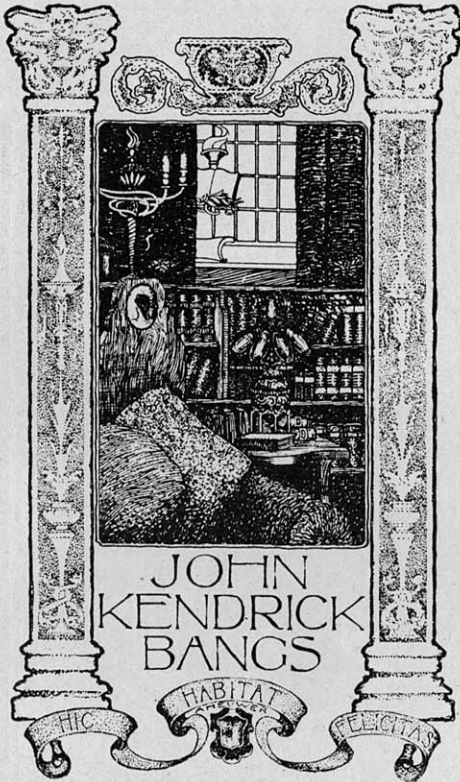
In all the accompanying illustrations the decorative treatment is prominent in combination with actual facts, as will be seen by the harmony of lettering. Good lettering is at a premium and hundreds of otherwise good drawings, in every branch of the art, are ruined by letters which have been simply



applied, instead of having grown, as a part of the whole.

A résumé of Mr. Euwer's work would not be complete by half without mention of his versatility as a writer. Numerous periodicals have been much the richer by contributions from his pen, and, in whatever style he chooses to write, he is equally successful. "Rickety Rimes and Rigmaro" is the title of a book of nonsense verse which appeared over his signature last year, and at once became so popular that a second edition is almost ready. The inscription on the title page reads:

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Rick-e-ty Rimes and Rig-ma-ro

By

ANTHONY H. EUWER

For

Fools, Philosophers and Free Thinkers

being a

Phan-tas-ma-gor-i-cal Con-glom-er-at-ion of

Bi-car-bon-at-ed Som-nam-bu-lisms

PICTORIAL PERPETRATIONS

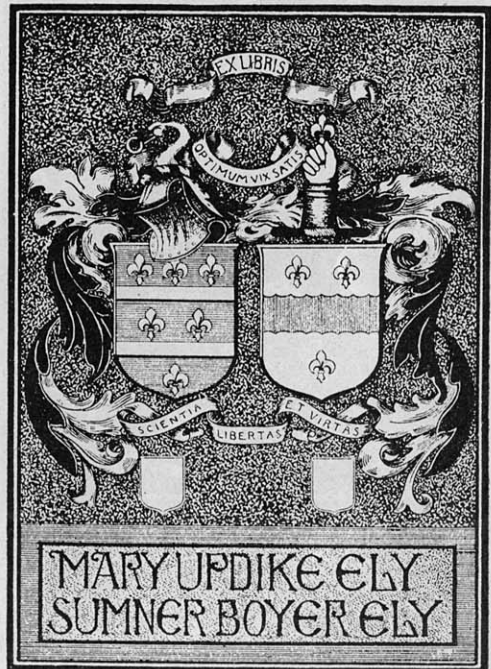
BY THE

AUTHOR

*'Tis poshy stuff, this printed guff,
We grudgingly concede it;
The meter leaks, the rythem reaks,
Its crippled feet impede it.
And yet for those who'd drown their woe,
'Tmay prove a sweet narcotic,
Altho' tis plain, that in the main,
The whole thing's idiotic.*

The contents of the book are fascinating from cover to cover. In nonsense verse there is certainly no better work, and the drawings are admirably suited to the text. To write verse that shall be pure nonsense, requires a gift of rare ability; mere foolishness in rhyme is not nonsense, and here Mr. Euwer's originality shows its color. The little volume is full of new words coined for the purpose, and through the whole work runs a tiny vein of philosophy invisible at first glance. This is felt by a bit of prose: "The Genius," a satire not altogether gentle, concerning a certain form of art prevalent in this country. The "Jorikey Girasticutus" and "A Nebulous Nocturne" are titles which arouse curiosity. Several of these drawings are herewith appended.

"The Ballad of Purple Land," a phantasy in two parts, is a more ambitious poem, charming throughout with characteristic



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"The Jorikey Girasticutus" from "Rickety Rimes"



The Dietician from "Rickety Rimes"

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and show a fine conformity with the text of the work. Many of the originals have been exhibited in Washington, Brooklyn, Pittsburg and New York, and three of them have been utilized in an effective screen.

As a last word, it may be said that the writer of this paper has had long and extensive opportunity of studying conventional drawings of all kinds, and, in passing, he wishes to acknowledge that for freshness and vigor, whether in illustration or in bookplate, Mr. Euwer's work will stand the most favorable comparison with any productions of its class. Every design of his has its *raison d'être*, and in working it out he has held to the idea that vivisection is not decoration. Therefore, his results are a healthy sign of individual effort to produce types which fulfil all conditions, without personal sacrifice of artistic inspiration.



"A Nebulous Nocturne," from "Rickety Rimes"

imagery which leaves one to meditate on other things than the fleeting show of our present existence. It will bear reading more than once, and, although tinged with an echo of regret, it contains no pessimism. The accompanying drawings are exquisite,



"Dawn" by Anthony H. Euwer