A PRINCE'S PRINCELY LIBRARY

A BONAPARTE AS A BOOK GATHERER

To every lover of books the probable fate of the remarkable library collected by Prince Lucien Bonaparte will be a matter of sincere interest. The first notice of this collection appeared in a letter from Mr. Collins, who visited him in the midst of the library (writes a Chronicle interviewee), fully agreed that it ought to be spared.

Mr. Collins has now found out that the vast house, with its red-stowed offices, was inhabited by Prince Lucien in 1815, when he lived in Norfolk-terrace, Baywater.

"It was a very handsome house, and the Prince was greatly interested in books," says Mr. Collins, "and he had been engaged in cataloguing the Prince's literary treasures which, he says, he will never see again, as his house has been destroyed by fire.

"I believe," Mr. Collins continues, "that the Prince's library was the most valuable collection of books in England at the time of his death. The Prince's library was a very large one, containing a great many volumes of rare and valuable books. The Prince was a very curious man, and his library was his life's work. He had spent many years in collecting these books, and he was greatly interested in them. He was a very learned man, and he had written many books himself. He was also a very fine-looking man, and he was very popular in society.

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was too much if something new, coming at the same time valuable, could be added to the library.

What was the Prince's method of preserving the variety of dialect, assuming he did not already find the means in existence?

"For example, he had—always by the most competent authority—written in all the Basque dialects. Again, holding that the development of railway intercommunication would soon make all local dialects disappear, he had the Song of Solomon written in the English dialects as we know it at present. You know that Simeon, 'I am black but comely,' or Ye daughters of Jerusalem, Listen to it—fine, altogether, I think—in the dialect of the Northumberland.

"Ae's black, but bonny, Salem lasses, Like the Radar-shows; Or in the celebrated song, Where the King Lies under for a lass, I once heard, when we were there, Beeswax's back's as sweet; Bees the sun may skin her land."

"Essentially the Library is a philological one, but I imagine it includes a variety of rare books not philological?"

"Naturally. The Prince being a Senator of France, a cousin of Louis Napoleon, and a well-known philologist, he had people bring him all sorts of interesting books.

This new building, the library includes more rare works not present, for instance, in the British Museum. There are three early copies of Bibles printed during the Prince's time, one thought should be presented to the British Museum. To the best of Mr. Gladstone's knowledge, there are three early copies of the Biblia Latina, and either of the three would be worth about $300. They are remarkable specimens of early German printing, and, if the characters in the cuts are inhabited by the costume and armor, not of Biblical times, but of the time of St. Paul, the latest 1504. Very valuable are no doubt the words for a little book here in Welsh written by Morys Glynne, after whom was written in French, under the inspiration of St. Charles Borromeo at Milan. It is a short definition of the Catholic faith, and was commanded by a Welsh squire to preserve the faith there. Some time ago it was lent to the Cymrodorion Society of London, and by them presented to the Crown.
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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1893.

Replying in the House of Commons to Captain Norton, Mr. S. Buxton said:

"I am not yet in a position to make a statement as to the policy the Government intended to pursue in reference to Matabeleland. In answer to Mr. Labouchere, I added that, according to the latest information, the peace should not be said to be at an end. Meanwhile, the action taken on the spot would prejudice the final decision that might be come to."

Mr. Labouchere asked whether the Government intended to obtain a reference to Matabeleland, and Mr. Gladstone having replied in the House, the hon. gentleman notified that on the spot, which seemed to him to be Thursday, he would take the usual steps to endeavour to obtain a statement.

In reference to the coal struggle, questions were put in regard to miners' wages, and the dispatch of troops to Wrexham.

Mr. Gladstone made a general statement to the House of Commons, during the pr
of old and unique books rivalling that of the British Museum in many ways. It is admitted that such a library will never be collected again by a private person.

Here is the opportunity to obtain an historical library—the best known private library in Europe—unique for its completeness, rare and old books, bindings, etc., etc.

The Bonapartes, as you know, are very-friendly to America. The Princess has said that she would be pleased to have it go to America and to Chicago.

Can you not get some man to give from $150,000 to $200,000 for this greatest public library on the market? I would rather buy the owner of this library to the University than the gift of half a dozen dormitories or laboratories to the University. It is both a library and the foundation of a Museum. One could fill a room with glass cases of unique and beautifully bound books.

We have many and influential friends here and they will be glad, after my departure to do anything to help us get it. Your brother, T.H.F.

London, Nov. 8th, 1893

Harner

Dear Brother:-

I have been looking up an important library during the past two weeks, viz: that of the late Prince Lucien Bonaparte.

I send you herewith a partial list of the languages and dialects represented in this collection—a list prepared specially for me by Mr. Victor Collins, who has charge of the library. (2) A letter from Richard Garnett, Keeper of the Printed Books (i.e. librarian) of the British Museum. (3) A letter from Dr. Root, late librarian of the India Office. (Dr. Root retired Oct. 1st, 1893, on account of the age limit—65 yrs. (4) Dr. E. Maundel Thompson, Principal Librarian (i.e. Director-general) of the British Museum, read these letters.
yesterday and authorized me to say to you that he fully endorses both of them.
(P. Le Paige Rount read this letter also and endorses them. Thompson and Rount were not personally acquainted with the late Prince and his library and hence they thought that their opinion could not be put on a par with those of Garnett and Post.)

(P.) Peter Strachanier, who was an intimate friend of the Prince regards this library as, by all odds, the best of its kind in the world. He knows the library well and first hand.

(2) A clipping from the London Chronicle yesterday, giving an interview with Mr. Victor Collins.

(3) Arthur Warren, sugar, guarantees and I went to the residence of the Princess on last Thursday, and examined the library — of course, not in detail. Warren has sent (on last Saturday) an account of this examination and his interview with Mr. Victor Collins to the Boston Herald. A copy of this article will reach you before this letter.

So much for my authorities. The English papers are full of it now.

The people who are after this library are:
(1) The French government; (2) The Russian Government; (3) Astor, who is reported to want it to give to the English; (4) Incertes, the book-seller.

The Princess wishes to have the library kept intact, and this excludes Incertes. She also wishes to have it kept together, as a whole, in a separate building, as a wing of a building, and to be known as the Prince Lucien Bonaparte Library.

The reserve price is $30,000. It might take $35,000 to $40,000 to get it.

There are 25,000 — 30,000 vols.

In the opinion of experts, the following are the chief points in its favor, viz: —
(1) its completeness; (2) the number of unique and valuable books not to be found in any other library; (3) the number of old and rare vols.; (4) the magnificent bindings with the royal arms of the Napoleons.

My chief argument would be this, viz: — that this is the best chance — the only one — of the century to obtain — in addition to the finest philological library in the world — a large collection.
My dear Groome,

In response to your wish to have a written record of my opinion concerning the literary value of the late Prince Lucien Bonaparte's Library, I herewith state that I consider that library to be unique as a collection of the best and rarest linguistic books; that it is unrivalled for its completeness on Basque and English dialects, containing many unique copies; and that it ought to be kept together.

Very truly yours,

R. Rost.

Late librarian of the India Office.
Budg & I are great Chums. He presented me his book on the Mummy last week.
Am working - at different thing - interest - like a dog.
Weather is fairly good.
What about the law school? I read something about it in the Chicago papers.
Will leave here about Dec 10. You can make up to Dec 12.
Will be glad in some ways to get back to the Upin.
The Register is a beauty.
If you can get the library you & the man who pays for it will go down into history.
It is the biggest thing out there.
Write often. Have not heard from you for a long time. Thank.
The Baptist Society has declined my MS. because its heterodoxy. You would laugh to see the reasons given. And the funny thing is that I was the time no one ordered as you for example — never mentioning documents, etc., etc. I am glad of it. I was ashamed of two of the chapter. I will rewrite these two bringing them up to date and publish with Bewley. We want the book very much.

I gave 20 pp. — 18 of Cuneiform to Bégold for his Journal on Nov. 1st and am to have proofs before Dec. 1st. It is the cleanest cut thing I have ever done — all new work on a Collection as yet untouched viz. the RM 2.

I have a lot of text for Hebrew also. I have ordered about $150 of books and am making out new lists. I have ordered 500 casts of cylinders of the large objects which we had at Yale.
November 6, 1893.

Having been requested to state my opinion of the character and importance of the literary collection by the late Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, I have no hesitation in saying that I consider it to be of great philological value, containing many unique books, and especially rich in works...
on difficult and excepti
al languages. I should
consider its dispersion a
serious misfortune, and
sincerely trust that mean
may be found for keeping
it together.

R. Garbett
Keeper of Printed Books
British Museum
Having been requested to state my opinion of the character and importance of the library collected by the late Prince Louis Lucien Bonaparte, I have no hesitation in saying that I consider it to be of great philological value, containing many unique books, and especially rich in works on difficult and exceptional languages. I should consider its dispersion a serious misfortune and sincerely trust that means may be found for keeping it together.

R. Garnett
Keeper of Printed Books,
British Museum.

Copy.
November 6, 1933

Having been impressed to state my opinion of the character and importance of the Library collection of the late Prince Pierre Lusignan Bonaparte, I have no hesitation in saying that I consider it to be of great philosophical value containing many valuable books and especially rare in works on difficult and exceptional languages. I endorse your letter to the Superintendent, suggesting a separate museum and library for keeping it together.
1 Elsworthy Place,
Primrose Hill, N. W.
5 Nov. 1893.

My dear Gwynne,

In response to your wish to have a written record of my opinion concerning the literary value of the late Prince Lucien Bonaparte's library, I herewith state that I consider that library to be unique as a collection of the best and rarest linguistic books; that it is unrivalled for its completeness on Basque and on English dialects, containing many unique copies; and that it ought to be kept together.

Very truly yours,

R. Rost.

(Late Librarian of the India Office.)

Copied.
I Knawghty Place

Princess Hill, N.W.

5 Nov. 1933

My dear Evan,

In response to your wish to have a written
record of my opinion concerning the literary nature of the late
Princess Victoria Bonaparte's Library, I herewith state that I
consider that Library to be unique as a collection of the best
and rarest literary books; that it is unique for the
comprehensiveness of its reading and the English classics, containing many
rare and unique copies; and that it ought to be kept together.

Very truly yours,

R.

(Incipient of the India Office)

Copy