GOUDY

MASTER OF LETTERS

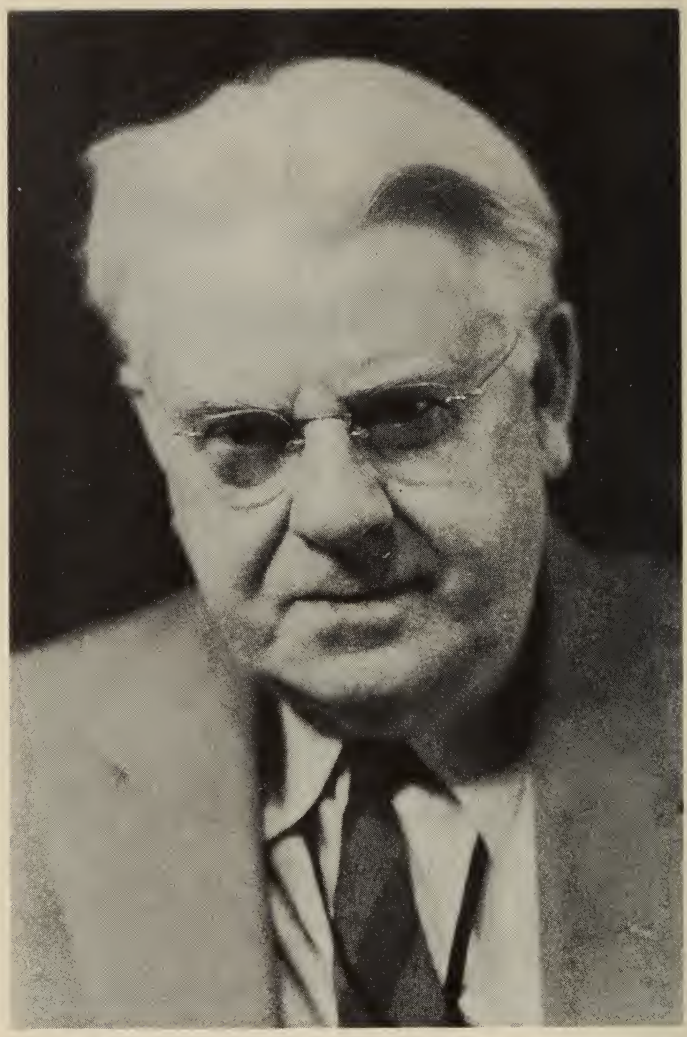

Photo by Euler

Frederic W. Goudy, 1937

GOUDY

MASTER OF LETTERS

BY

VREST ORTON

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

FREDERIC W. GOUDY

THE BLACK CAT PRESS
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TO

LELIA AND GARDNER ORTON

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DANIEL BERKELEY UPDIKE, whose ability to make charming epigrams has enriched and enlightened our typographic lore, once said, ". . . any person of moderate intelligence can make the most of his advantages . . . the trick being to make the most of one's disadvantages." No one in the history of American graphic arts has accomplished this trick with greater success than Frederic Goudy.

Not even Goudy's best friends claim that he was born a genius. Certainly he has never lived or acted like one. His early years were destitute of the advantages so handy nowadays to students of printing. No typographic schools or teachers existed to train him. He lacked the encouragement of fellow workers. He had no opportunity to feel the lure of scholarship or to see and be inspired by the work of masters in the art of printing.

For years, Goudy was obliged to work for a living at the dull tasks of bookkeeping, selling real estate and clerking in stores. Even after he became excited about letters and printing with them, for a long time he still had to cut his path through a tangled jungle of bad taste and slipshod work all around him.

In spite of all this, Goudy persevered. He made

the most of his disadvantages. As the honors and the kudos came, I can think of only one word to express how he took them. He endured them. An average man, he was sincerely modest and, I think, a little startled as success met him . . . a little unwilling to believe it true. As John Kimberly Mumford wrote: "It is some men's painful fate that after they have set a mark upon their times, woven themselves silently and unbeknown into the lives of many, they should pass from the earthly scene unknown. Frederic W. Goudy is not by way of joining this pathetic caravan. But he would have been a member in good standing if it had been left to him. As a self-promoter he is as noisy as the growing grain."

Cold facts, taken off the record, show that Frederic Goudy has designed well over one hundred type faces and is responsible for the establishment and operation, for over thirty-five years, of what is now the oldest private press in America.

But these are purely quantitative appraisals. Merely to set them down again on paper would be to duplicate the work already done by other hands. It is highly improbable, I think, that many of these hundred type faces will survive, as Caslon has survived. In another century, I venture to predict, no more than two or three Goudy fonts will be in use.

What I am trying to get at is this: it really matters not a jot whether Goudy has designed a hundred type faces or a thousand, but whether all become a permanent part of our typographic equipment in

another hundred years, or not a single one. It seems to me Fred Goudy is going to be remembered for something far more lasting and important, even though far less tangible, than the number of types he has created. In fact, the public has done Goudy a disservice in paying so much attention to this numerical score as if it were the *sine qua non* of his value to American graphic arts and American culture.

The story of Frederic Goudy's success is one of the very best examples we have of the apotheosis of the average man. Nowhere but in America could a man like Goudy have achieved so much. Nothing seemed to be in his favor, yet for some reason he got started on the right path. Luck, fate, or call it what you will, seemed against him, yet he managed to get on. He was, as I have said, no genius, He did not, like some of the brilliant figures in our history, flash across the scene with great noise and light. No one could, on the surface, distinguish Fred Goudy from the average American workman who had come from an average American family, with an average American background.

But Fred Goudy is an artist and a craftsman. His impact on the last half century of American printing has been that of an artist and craftsman. In this period when the entrepreneurs took over everything and art nearly died out, and when America reached the zenith of a rampant commercialism which leapt from one vulgarity to another, Fred Goudy kept

right on being an artist and a craftsman. Of the some half dozen distinguished leaders in American printing of this epoch, not one was able, more steadfastly and more successfully, to keep this one attitude alive and to work by it alone.

It is this temperament and this point of view that, basically, make up the things men live by. And the man Goudy will be remembered, I think, long after most of his types are lost in the hot oblivion of the melting pot, because his long and useful life has whole-heartedly and resolutely been devoted to a good cause when a good cause was most needed. That was the cause of beauty and integrity.

In the brave new world of tomorrow, we shall have, I suppose, to strive more and more to make printing serve the real purpose for which it was invented; the purpose of multiplying in great numbers for the masses, the good words of those who have good words to say. The isolated work of men with hand presses, slowly and carefully printing a few words on a few sheets of handmade paper, will have to be branded as pure dilettantism and will, perforce, give way to the men who shall make possible the faster and better ways of getting the good words before the greatest number of people. But the faster and better ways need no longer be the cheap, dowdy and shoddy ways of the late nineteenth century. A cleaner and purer functionalism is at hand.

This was made possible, as evidence is already beginning to prove, by the work and temperament,

in the last fifty years, of such artists and craftsmen as Frederic Goudy. Despite the fact that such men may have little place in this future world, their influence must still be felt. For it is they who gave us the purer forms and made us realize that printing can never do its job for humanity unless, along with speed and coverage, it carries with it those humanistic qualities of aesthetic taste and feeling.

If men like Goudy had never lived, the downward trend of printing in the late nineteenth century might have continued until letters became unreadable and culture was crippled. Goudy helped rescue printing from its crazy tail-spin and made us realize that even though speed and quantity were, by necessity, becoming the objectives, we could never quite do without something else.

That Goudy helped to provide this something else gives him a permanent place in the history of the graphic arts.

And it also makes him, I think, of interest to every man who reads the English language. As a matter of fact, that is the reason I ventured to write this piece about Frederic Goudy in the first place. The average man, even the average printer, knows little about how types are designed and cast into metal. Type, so far as they know, grows on trees, or is mined or at least is obtained by some bizarre and cryptic process.

One time, several years ago, whilst visiting a printing shop on the eastern shore of Maryland and

being shown through the plant, I remarked to the proprietor that it was good to see that he had a run of Goudy type in his cases. I went on to say that I had the honor of knowing Mr. Goudy. The man looked up, a little skeptical . . . "Mr. Goudy?" he said . . . "you mean Goudy is a man's name?"

I wrote this piece to tell this average American printer and the general reading public, that Goudy is indeed a man's name . . . a man very much alive and interesting as a man. This book is openly intended for popular consumption. I make no apologies to my friends in the printing world for dwelling here upon the things about Goudy and his life that seem to be of popular interest, and for omitting all the technical minutiae and dates and bibliographies of type faces that so properly belong in a more formal and complete record of Fred Goudy's contribution to the graphic arts.

VREST ORTON

Weston, Vermont
September 3, 1938

Introduction

After reading Vrest Orton's book in galley form to see if I might safely accept the publisher's request to write a bit of introduction for it, I was reminded of Bernard Shaw's inquiry to another author: "Did all these things happen, or did you invent them?" As I read, I wondered too if he has not over-estimated achievement in his efforts to interpret the events and progress in the life of a prosaic personage who has never sought acclaim.

Yet I am glad Mr. Orton has made his work interpretative rather than critical. I already feel myself "a trifle out-moded" and I do not feel that I could bear with equanimity, undue criticism at this time; nor do I desire undeserved adulation.

Mr. Orton has done a pleasant thing — that is, what he has done is at least pleasant reading for me. I have tried to read his interpretation as though it were not myself of whom he was writing but instead someone else, because, to me, I cannot even now realize that what he says of me can be true or even, if true, important to any except my intimate friends. I imagine that I must have a genius for friendship. I

have so many known and unknown friends whose loyalty has become a tradition and I am more concerned about retaining their regard than I am for any fame he attributes to me.

As I have said many times before, my craft is a simple one; I am a simple man who thinks simply, and my work is simple, that is, it presents the simplicity that takes account of the essentials, that eliminates unnecessary lines and parts. But I do not mean the bastard simplicity that presents mere crudity of detail or execution and neglects to include beauty and dignity which makes simple forms at once pleasant, yet not detracting or lessening in any way their utility or purpose. That I was born with a mechanical sense and a natural deftness with tools is true, but that that deftness should later manifest itself in the making of letter forms was not among the dreams of my youth. It was near a score of years before it occurred to me to make any use of my ability to draw for the drawing of mere letters, and even then it came about more or less casually.

I have told elsewhere how my work as an accountant in a book store brought me into closer contact with book dealers and publishers and from my visits to their stores to the sort of books that opened my mind to an appreciation of them as examples of craft and typographic art, and not merely as sources of literary information.

Always a reader, I had formed something of a taste for better reading than the Jack Harkaway stories or the Alger books (which I do not think I ever read), and then I began to notice that certain books presented a quality of interest not dependent on the text of the book itself. What was it? It must be the types in which they were set. But letters are letters and types are letters only. What is the difference between one 'a' and another? It was then that I began any serious study of printing and types, a study that continues even now.

Mr. Orton has gone into considerable detail as to my progress along these lines so I need not recount them here. He has shown me as quite the very ordinary person I really am, a man with ordinary likes and dislikes, quick at times to anger, slow to lose it; at all times ready to argue a point but not intolerant or bull-headed. One thing he does not bring out is that I believe my artistic conscience is always on the job, although I might hesitate to say as much for my moral conscience, which I maintain is as good as new through not too much use.

I have never regarded myself as a "typographer" — I print because I want to and in the way I want to; those who like my way — well, that's a matter that concerns them only, those who don't — the same thing again is true. Of types and type design I can't help feeling that forty years of study and prac-

tice in their making entitles me to consider my own opinion as a thing of some value, and I have said by way of explanation elsewhere "I have attempted (in my work) to maintain a complete indifference toward public opinion, since I am convinced that only by such indifference could the results of my study and endeavors be likely to reach heights of sublimity or distinction; the versatility and imagination displayed in my work must be my very own, and not tempered by the suggestions of others." The value of my work future generations will judge more correctly than is possible today; yet my work has been for this day rather than for posterity.

It is a matter of great pride and satisfaction that some of my types have had a popularity and fame during my lifetime which never was accorded some of the monumental types of the past during the lifetime of their makers. I am glad that I have never consciously permitted my work to become a mere means to exploit my own handicraft, but have endeavored always to make use, beauty, and legibility the great *desiderata*.

The boy who never went to college but who kept high ideals constantly before his eyes thus attains, for a time, a definite place in the attention of a too-forgetful world as one who has produced something, he hopes, of value to his fellow men.

And if I never went to college, neither did I ever

attend art classes, nor did I ever have practical instruction in printing. I found early in my work that what I needed was included in books, and that books were as open to me as to others. All I needed was to attempt to apply what I found in them, to rediscover for myself the principles set forth in them — what more could I get from a teacher in an art class?

I would wish, as was said of Morris, my epitaph might intimate that "he sought to do good work within the limits of his own craft."

FRED W. GOUDY

Marlboro, New York
March 4, 1939

GOUDY
MASTER OF LETTERS

TO TAKE another slant on the old adage about a prophet being without honor in his own country, this story is about an American workman who has been for years laden with honor galore, in his own and other countries. There is, to attest this, a glittering array of medals, scrolls, greetings and other manifest evidences of the good this man has done, and books, magazines and the movies have made record of it. Not long ago Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, journeyed to New York to honor this American workman.

"He is one of the few people," she told her audience, "left to us in this generation, in this day of machinery and mass production who works both with his hands and with his brain. He loves the word: the English word, the printed word, the spoken word and he serves, I think, through the type he designs to glorify that word, to make that word comprehensible and understandable to all people. He works at it like a workman because he is a workman in the higher and larger sense. It is not enough that we should understand the beautiful and delicate line in the design of type; it is important we should get that type, set it up in a press and print the word and

hope that that word will be the good word, the word of men of sincerity and understanding."

What manner of man can this be who is set up so high by many authorities, and yet is heard so little of by the man on the street? An acquaintance with Frederic W. Goudy, the most prolific letter designer in history, be it in person or print, is an acquaintance with a man rare in this day and age. He is the man, as Madame Secretary emphasized, "who loves the word, and serves to glorify that word." Anything written about Frederic Goudy's work, as he himself has suggested, ought to be entitled "The Strangeness of Familiar Things," for what is more familiar to us all than letters . . . in writing or in type? Yet what is stranger than the way these letters are created and the men who create them?

The first thing we learn, after we learn to toddle and talk, is letters . . . and after the last thing has happened to us, we get them cut on a stone to mark our place. They say hello and good-bye and everything in between. No matter what we do or know, letters will always play an important part in our lives because they are symbols for ideas. We are apt to forget that they were first carved, thousands of years ago, on slabs of appletree wood by the Chinese to make the first block-books; that the Babylonians shaped them of clay, and that they were cut in stone to inscribe the Trajan column at Rome a hundred years after the birth of Christ. We know that they were later written on sheepskin by learned monks to

make rich manuscript books and that Gutenberg invented printing from movable type by hand-casting letters in metal from which he printed the first, and some say the most beautiful book ever printed. Today, some five hundred years later, we see letters being made of lead, faster than one can count, by curious and rather baffling machines. All this time letters have made thoughts visible . . . and done a familiar job for mankind. But few men, except printers, have thought much about letters since they tried to put them together on building blocks. They see them in books and magazines and never notice them unless the letters are fantastic enough to hit them in the eye. Which is, by the way, as it should be. Goudy once wrote, "when typography arouses interest and pleasure for itself alone and draws to itself the attention that belongs to the author's words, it becomes a typographic impertinence." This job of good letters is the most anonymous job in the world.

These fifty-two letters, twenty-six big and twenty-six small, were not born unaided, nor did they just grow. They have to be designed as buildings or bridges, or else they'd fail in their purpose. There is a long notable list of men from the fourteenth century on, each of whom designed one to half a dozen alphabets. But in America today there is this one man, Frederic W. Goudy, who has designed more than one hundred alphabets of letters for printing types . . . many times more than any other designer in the whole history of printing.

Speaking in New York, Goudy once said, "Sometimes when I am asked what my business is and I answer 'I am a type designer,' I often have to go into considerable detail to make clear to the inquirer just what my work is. If only I could answer such an inquiry as easily as one man did, who, when asked as to what his occupation might be, replied, 'I used to be an organist.' When pressed as to why he gave up that work, he said, 'My monkey died.' "

In spite of the fact that the movie newsreel cameras have looked into Goudy's workshop at Marlboro-on-Hudson, and made his face familiar, for one brief moment, to millions, Fred Goudy is as anonymous as the type letters he designs, draws, and casts into metal there.

Goudy, in appearance, is indeed your everyday kind of a man. Thick-set, short, with unruly hair and a firm chin, but with a twinkle in his eye, easy to meet, and a humorist of Mark Twain calibre, he seems in retrospect, the balanced amalgam of an artist and a workman. You can't find that amalgamation often nowadays. That is one reason why Goudy has remained, to the general public, a man of mystery. In the golden age of printing, after Gutenberg, the printer and type creator were men of the first order. On the wall of many good printing shops (there's a copy at the Grolier Club in New York) you'll see an engraving of an early master-printer standing at his wooden hand-press, his workmen gathered around

Goudy the Old Master

him, showing the first proof to the richly attired king and nobles. Then, printers consorted with kings. Princes were their patrons. Printing, and the making of letters in type for printing, were considered as arts and men practicing them as artists who had to have a background of knowledge, a foreground of intelligence and a middle ground of taste. Such men were scholars; they collected libraries, used them, wrote erudite treatises. Such men were craftsmen: they preferred to make beautiful things with their own hands. They got a creative joy from their craft and their art, because they did it themselves. They were respected and admired by all.

Now, centuries later, a new economy has descended upon the world and craftsmanship and handicrafts have been swept into the background. Typefounding has become a business carried on in factories. Printing too has become a business, and often a maddening one. With the exception of a handful of artists who are doing fine work based on the rich traditions of typography, printing is carried on for profit alone. It is organized, by necessity, to exist by the aid of machines, salesmen, efficiency experts and other modern improvements. One can't blame contemporary printers for these conditions any more than one can blame the twentieth century for its existence.

Yet, in the face of all this, right here in the twentieth century and under such an order of things, Frederic Goudy has succeeded by being an

artist and workman: the kind of man the first printers and type men were. "A miracle that came out of the Middle West," wrote Milton MacKaye about Goudy. In one sense, I hardly consider Goudy a miracle at all. It is no miracle in America (or did not used to be) for a man to achieve success by long hard work. Goudy is the typical old American . . . the kind of man who made the American dream possible. His story is the apotheosis of the good American workman who kept stolidly and resolutely at it. He belongs, perhaps, in that popular American Valhalla of inventors and practical mechanics of the nineteenth century: Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Charles Kettering, Hiram Maxim and Simon Lake.

Yet Goudy, who used to keep books, sitting on a long-legged, uncomfortable stool, in the little towns of the Middle West; who used to sort and pile money as a cashier, has been and is a poor business man. He has not made money in the accepted sense. Unlike the gentlemen mentioned above, Goudy will probably die poor. He has no formal education, that is, he's not a college man. When he needs something done, he doesn't go off searching through text books or calling in theorists and high-priced engineers. He sits down, thinks out the job in hand and then does it. If he needs a special machine he makes it. He gets results. His machines work.

One day up at Marlboro, seventy-five miles north of New York, I was seated with Fred Goudy in his

workshop, an old mill by a falling stream. In came a man from the Monotype Company. This gentleman's great type plant in the city had, I presume, every type-making gadget known. The two men got to talking about the differences between the big plant's methods and Goudy's. When Goudy told, in plain language, just how he had set to work and built up his simple methods to turn his letter designs into type, the exclamation was, "Why, you can't *do* it that way!"

Goudy smiled. "Well, that's the way I did it."

And he had. He had cut through all the red tape, ignored all the theories, forgotten all the text books and had done it.

"Now when you're cutting your matrix from the tracing of the pattern, just how accurate do you make the line?" Goudy asks as the conversation continues.

"We find one-thousandth of an inch sufficient," says his guest. "What do you find?"

"I find," says Goudy quietly as if it were unnecessary to state it, "that two ten-thousandths of an inch is not *too* accurate. That isn't perfect, but I need *some* leeway."

The other looks up, amazed. "Why you can't *see* two ten-thousandths of an inch."

"No," says Goudy, "you can't. But you can *feel* it."

Right here lies the secret to Goudy's art. *You can't see it, but you can feel it.*

Indeed, you can't see whether one letter is good or

bad perhaps when you've got it alone, but in a page of type you certainly can feel it. You have to have good type faces to begin with or you won't get good printing. Good type is the part of good printing you don't always notice. But you can feel it.

Because Goudy is one of the simple men of this world who make, as Temple Scott remarked, the world a pleasanter place to live in because of the good they do and the good way they do it, Goudy is honored today. No miracle is Goudy, but only the triumph of a simplicity he has often made fun of. In speaking at a banquet given him in London, Goudy said, "About designing types there is little to be said. It is so easy. Just a case of thinking of a letter and then marking a line around it."

Goudy, a clerk wandering from town to town, a western realtor, a homesteader on the plains of Dakota, a village sign painter, a man who did not come in contact with the fascinating art of printing until he was thirty years old, and now the world's leading type designer. How . . . why? This is what makes the story of Goudy worth telling.

When I was up at Deepdene, shortly before Mrs. Goudy died, we were seated one day in the shop, talking about Goudy's early life.

"My life doesn't interest people," Goudy was saying, "why should they want to know what kind of breakfast food I eat . . . or when I go to bed. It's only the work I do that counts."

Mrs. Goudy, who has been more responsible for Fred's success than any other human being, and to whom, on every occasion, Fred has paid his respects and given full credit, was standing before a typecase setting type as we talked. She had set Goudy-made types for over thirty-five years. Looking over her stick, she said;

"That's just right, Fred! Why should everyone want to know about *your* early life?" I tried to make Goudy see it was necessary and important to talk about just that.

Goudy laughed . . . he liked to have fun with Bertha. Now, wanting to please both of us, he said, "Well, Bertha, there is one thing, I had to live my early life to get where I am, so I guess we can't forget it."

Just a month before General Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House, and when some of the northern troops were already marching home, Frederic William Goudy was born in the village of Bloomington, Illinois, the county seat, in the heart of the corn belt, 125 miles south of Chicago. It now boasts of 30,000 souls and is called the Evergreen City. But when Fred came into the world it was much smaller and much quieter, a pleasant place for a boy. Pleasanter still, we can fancy, was the old farmstead of Fred's grandfather at Monmouth, Illinois, where he used to spend many a languid summer day. It was to the town library he went to look at and to read

copies of that most wonderful of magazines to a boy, the super-illustrated, exciting *Harpers Weekly*, even then full of pictures of the late Civil War made by "Our staff artists at the front." Truly halcyon days for a boy. And imagine too the awe-inspiring total eclipse of the sun which took place one time when Fred was at his grandfather's farm and so scared him that he ran into the house and hid under the sewing machine. And then later, at Rock Island at night, the setting-up, strong music of military bands, and the flare of torches being carried by the excited marchers in political parades for Grant, then running for president. The boy saw all this and more. He saw crashing ice jams and the massive log rafts on the Mississippi; he gloried in the spectacular exhibition of fireworks on Bloomington Courthouse Square on July 4, 1876; he listened to the tales of his brother, back from the Centennial at Philadelphia; he climbed down into the dark, dripping Illinois caves to explore . . . just as Tom Sawyer—not too far away in space and time—had done.

Fred Goudy came of a strong line of solid and unpretentious people. His grandfather, Thomas Biggar Goudy, was a gentle man, quiet and reserved, a farmer who had felt the urge of the west. And his father, John Fleming Goudy, born of a line that loved freedom and learning more than money, was a school teacher, natural product of these traits. Thus they both could give Fred much more than a good bringing-up. Fred got his plain ways from

Thomas, the farmer, and from his father, the learner, his insatiable quest for knowledge and for a better way of doing things. From his mother Amanda came, he believes, his love of beauty and truth.

Fred, says a schoolmate, was a plump little boy and an indifferent scholar who hated arithmetic and grammar, as many boys have. He early formed the habit of reading books. His father had a respectable private library which Fred soon exhausted and he spent many hours at the public library. His brother Charles was then working in the bookstore of S. A. Maxwell & Company, and Fred often went there and in a curtained-off room in the back, read his fill of such curious companions as Mark Twain, *St. Elmo* and *Helen's Babies*. Not a single schoolmate of his in those days saw a great future for young Fred Goudy.

"We all liked him," says Mrs. H. A. Thom of Shelbyville, Illinois, "but somehow he was always a little queer."

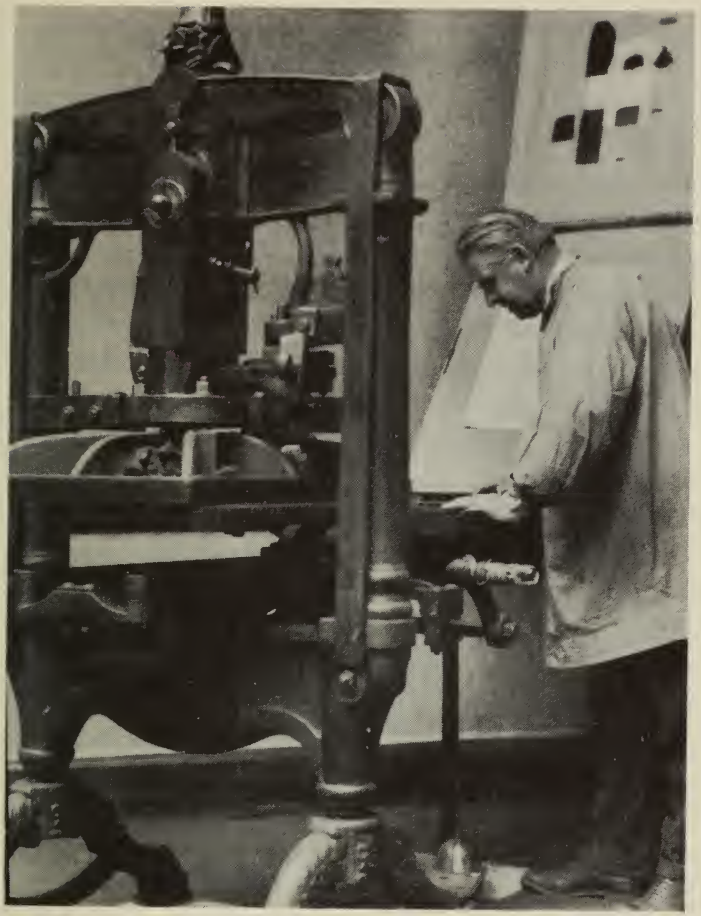
Robert Root, an artist who also came out of Shelbyville, says, "Goudy was no unusual lad. I would have said he was destined to become a sign painter."

He was a plodder. He got things done when he went after them and after a while he got arithmetic so he later earned his living by it when he was keeping books. But Fred Goudy was not born to be a bookkeeper, however honorable that profession may be. He was to be a master of letters. Even then

he was busy copying all the wood-engravings in *Harpers Weekly*.

Bloomington had, and no doubt still has, a Court-house Square which is, in southern and mid-western towns, the center of all activity. One day Fred, on a parental errand of some importance, was unable to resist the temptation of walking through the Square. There, sitting under a big umbrella with a kitchen table before him, a man played with a strange, limber wooden frame that appeared to the boy, as he crept nearer, to be as double-jointed as a circus freak. Conquered by curiosity, Fred walked up and stood before him. With one end of the thingumbob, which was securely screwed to the table, the man was tracing a photograph, while the other end, which held a pencil, recorded a copy of the photograph three times as large. Fred watched him, open-mouthed. He was to be more open-mouthed when the man, who had a way with boys, suggested that he, Fred Goudy, work it too. It was very simple. It was called a pantagraph; it would enlarge or reduce pictures and it cost only twenty-five cents.

Before this time Fred had been copying all the old wood-engravings he could get hold of. He progressed to where he could look at a picture and on the next day make a copy from memory. One of his masterpieces won a blue ribbon at the county fair. But here was something else, something vastly more wonderful than he had even dreamed of. Think of it! All he had to do was trace a picture and a big



Printing Edna St. Vincent Millay's Renascence

◆

Goudy using Albion Press at Anderson Galleries

copy would come out. Leastwise he could do it if he only owned that pantagraph contraption. But he didn't own it and it cost twenty-five cents. Fred walked home with a heavy heart. A quarter of a dollar was a fortune to a boy in those days. But Fred was a good talker. The spirit and temperament that have made him today one of our most amusing speakers were probably born that August day when he talked his father into buying the pantagraph. He got the "shin-plaster," as the boys called a quarter in Bloomington. "The passage of light," remembers Goudy, speaking of this episode now, "is synonymous with speed. But with that shin-plaster in my clenched fist, I was a serious competitor to light in getting back to the man under the umbrella."

The man was still there. He took the quarter and Fred took the marvelous invention and rushed home to demonstrate its strange workings to his father and mother, and prove to them how beautifully and miraculously it would copy *any*thing. How it would copy pictures right out of *St. Nicholas* magazine, and make grand enlargements in real crayon.

All this proves the boy had early artistic ability, one says. Yes, but interestingly enough, it shows more.

When Frederic Goudy was sixty years old and had been designing type letters for many years and was firmly established as America's foremost type creator, he decided to turn over a new leaf. No longer was he satisfied to draw, with a pen or pencil, the

letters for type and then let someone else make the metal moulds from the drawings and so make type for printers to use. He was going to do the whole thing himself! In Robert Wiebking, Sr. of Chicago, Goudy found a good punch-cutter, but oftentimes this man, good as he was, could not by the methods then in use help adding to or taking away something from the letter designs Goudy made. When Goudy went to him with the pen drawing of a new letter and said, "Can you make this, Bob?" Bob Wiebking would look at the new design and say no . . . no he couldn't make it *just* like that because there was nothing like that in existence. But if Goudy took him a design and said, "Do this, Bob," Wiebking would go ahead, cut the matrix in metal, and with the exception of a few deviations, the type might come out right. But not *all* right. At sixty, Goudy decided this method must be improved upon.

His types, he realized, could never be just as he wanted them until one man could do the complete job in every stage from the time the letters were thought of in the mind, until they were cast into the actual lead type. This man, he now knew, had to be himself. At the age of sixty he started to learn all over again.

It is interesting to see how he works. Here is his drawing of a new letter about nine inches in size on artist's drawing paper. How are you going to get a matrix (or mould) one sixteenth of an inch high, exactly like that paper drawing . . . a brass mould

to make a piece of type about the size you are now reading? Goudy had a long memory. He did not call in experts or look things up in books. He remembered the pantagraph of the Courthouse Square.

This pantagraph he developed to his own special use. Now he draws the letter with a pencil on cardboard. Then with a sharp knife he cuts out the letter from the cardboard. This becomes his master-pattern. In this fashion his designing of letters has a double touch of the hand craftsman; they are drawn by hand and then cut out by hand. The rest is simply a question of arithmetic. Goudy had not forgotten that. He even learned to use a slide rule. His adaptation of the pantagraph machine is a two shelf affair. At one end on a shelf is a small tracer. At the other end also on a shelf is a small sharp drill. Goudy lays the big cut-out cardboard letter on the upper shelf and turns on the motor. He begins to move the tracer within the cut-out letter. The drill on the lower shelf whirrs and cuts out of a flat piece of metal a sunken pattern letter . . . a letter exactly like the drawing only one-third as large. This first step makes what he calls the metal working-pattern.

He now places this pattern on another pantagraph machine called the matrix-engraving machine, a development of the old punch-cutting device invented by a man named Benton. Goudy has worked out some improvements in this machine but it's the same pantagraph idea. Just another way of reducing size. It has a small hard drill, so small,

indeed, that Goudy has to sharpen it under a microscope on a machine he made for the purpose. This drill at the top works on a block of brass about an inch-and-a-half by half-an-inch in size and engraves there a sunken mould of the letter, exactly the size of the type wanted. This is done by pushing the tracer, at the bottom, all around the inner walls of the metal work-pattern letter. The brass matrix is what casters use to cast lead type. All this has to be carefully worked out. For instance, the cutting drill has to be ground so its width is in the same ratio to the tracer below as the type size is to the metal pattern letter that's being traced. When you realize the tracer is from twenty to fifty-thousandths of an inch in diameter and that the speedy drill is a matter for microscopes to see, you'll realize it's all a pretty delicate business.

Good enough for the boy who hated arithmetic and didn't have any formal education! But the informal education he got himself was far more interesting and valuable.

THE Goudy family, in Fred's first few years, lived in four Illinois towns, in one of them twice. It was at Macomb that young Fred watched the potters turning their wheels, just as he had watched, earlier in Bloomington, the lathes turning out chair legs in a chair factory, and he began to see something. He saw that it was no use whittling out a chair leg or shaping a pot with one's hands, if one could

BRUCE'S SPECIMEN BOOK

THE COMPOSITOR'S AND

Oratio de Egregiis

FINISHING TOOLS HEATED BY GAS

1518, said: I sell Elegant Books, Nicely Printed, at Paltry Prices.

CAXTON

List of the Founts of Type and Woodcut

BERNARDI, MILANO, 1866.

The Expense Book of the Ripoli Press at Florence, under the date of April 23d, 1477.

EDWARD ROWE MORES, LONDON,

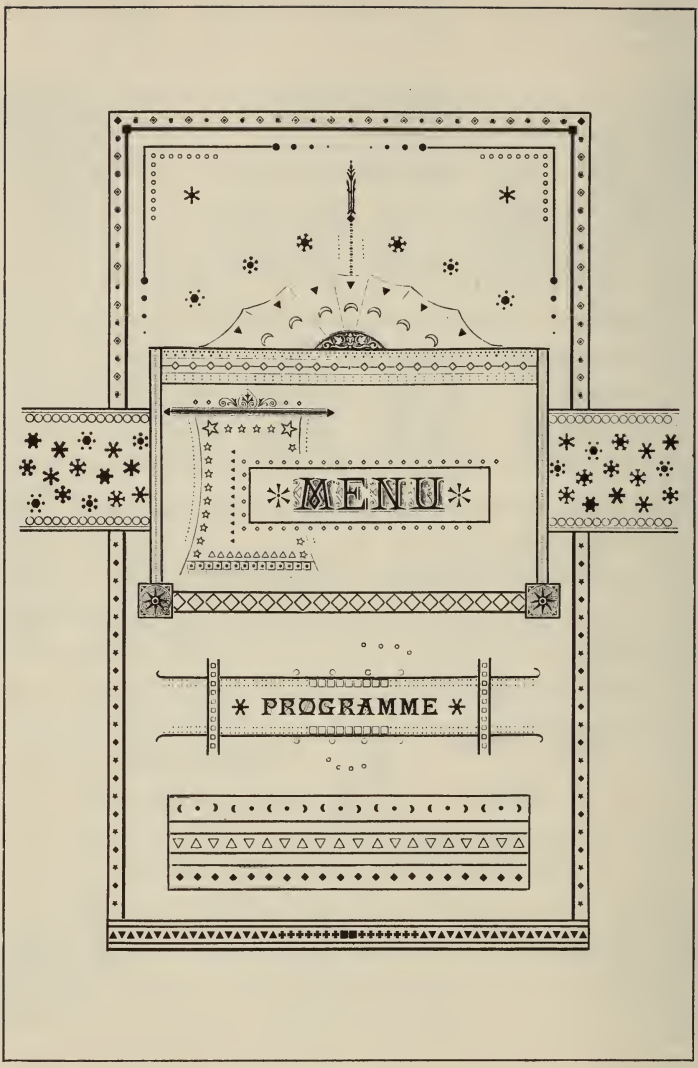
ESSAI HISTORIQUE ET CRITIQUE

Stenographia, or the Lettres d'un Bibliographe.

SOWER'S BIBLE,

EPISTLE OF JOHN,

Type styles when Goudy began designing type



Typography at the time Goudy began his career

master a machine and make the machine follow the will of the hand and the head. Years later when people got to talking about the dominance of the machine over man, Goudy would smile. They would tell him that he had sold out to the machine age because he used a pantagraph and drill attached, to cut his type, instead of doing it by hand as the old punch cutters used to do. Hand work was not, Goudy truly saw, a fetish to be worshipped or an end in itself, as a lot of dilettantes thought it was. Going back to the fifteenth century to live was no gain when we had the twentieth upon us. "I have never permitted my craft to become an end in itself, instead of a means only to a useful end," Goudy has said. He had also said that it made little difference to him what means, mechanical or otherwise, were used to reproduce his letter drawings, just so long as they were reproduced perfectly and accurately. The type was the thing that counted . . . everything else was the means to that end.

As James A. Garfield, shot by an assassin, had breathed his last and the side-whiskered Chester A. Arthur stepped up to the presidency, the elder Goudy moved his family to Butler, another small town in southern Illinois. Here Fred made his first attempt at handicraft and that too had much to do with shaping his career. He won a foot-power lathe. I say *won* advisedly because he didn't have the ten dollars the advertisement in Perry Mason's *Youths' Companion* said the lathe would cost. So he went

after the ten. He got a job as janitor in the local grammar school, sweeping out four rooms and ringing the first bell at 8:30 every morning. At this he worked for six weeks for the ten dollars with which he sent for the lathe. It was a pretty poor lathe compared with the turret lathes of today, but to young Fred it was the most perfect machine in the world and with it he made what seemed to him beautiful croquet mallets of Osage orange wood. Many other things he turned out and all this didn't hurt him for the work that was to come. It gave him something of a practical knack in mechanics and a sure hand.

What has all this to do with letters? Didn't Goudy draw letters when he was a boy, since how could he have become the world's most prolific letter creator? Yes, he did.

In 1881-82 Fred's family moved to Shelbyville, Illinois, a town south of Decatur, the county seat, in the coal mining and stock-raising district. As someone has said, "Today Shelbyville tries to remember more about the lad and is surprised and more or less vexed that it can not." It was here that Fred made a steam engine. He still had his lathe. But he couldn't bore hard metal with a wood lathe and of course a steam engine had to be made of hard metal. But wait a minute! He found that there was a metal called Babbitt metal which could be melted and poured. With considerable ingenuity he turned out a mould and a core of wood on his lathe and then

poured the soft Babbitt metal into it and had a cylinder. The steam engine worked. Goudy was to say later, "Anything which is to be done, and which it is humanly possible to do, may be done by anyone if he will set about it with enough persistence and patience, and if he lives long enough." This, indeed, is his philosophy.

But it was in Shelbyville that Fred came to letters. There was a Presbyterian Church and the Sabbath School had a room of its own in the basement. It was a bare room, but Fred probably never noticed that until he got an occasional job as right-hand man to Asa Blankenship, the local paper-hanger. Asa, having been astonished at a trick young Fred had shown him in fitting a wall paper border around a curve, took Fred in to help him fix up the Sunday School room.

When the walls were papered, Fred noticed that the top of the room looked empty. He got to thinking and finally suggested that a Bible quotation or two wouldn't look bad running around there. Asa said all right. But how are you going to get sentences onto a bare wall? You've got to have letters to do that. Fred Goudy had never made a letter in his life. But he thought he could. With nothing to copy from, he sat down and began to sketch on some brown manila paper, and there were the letters. Using these wrapping paper letters as patterns he marked them out on some strips of solid color wallpaper he'd bought, and laying the strips down on the paper hanger's table,

he cut them out with a pair of scissors; enough letters to say the Ten Commandments around the top of the room. He took the letters, spaced them on the long table to fit the spaces he had measured, then getting up on the tall ladder, he pasted them on the wall. They looked pretty fine.

When this was done the trustees were so awe-struck with the effect that they consented when Fred, getting ambitious, asked if he could do the same thing and put more texts in the empty panels between the windows. He now made more letters to say the Beatitudes. He poked around in the local printing office and found a copy of the old-fashioned printer's Bible, the *Bruce Specimen Book*, and from this copied out some fancy corner pieces and an initial letter. He cut these out of gold paper. Combined with the original letters he'd drawn, the panels were now decorated. The people came and admired. Perhaps they felt they had an artist in their midst. Perhaps not. Years later, Goudy's friend Robert Ballou tried to find out if the walls of that room could be photographed so that the first letters of our great American letter master might be preserved. But alas, the havoc of the years had triumphed and what with many paperings and scrapings, Goudy's first letters had disappeared. How would they have looked, we wonder, beside his later creations?

Now the scene changes. The boy grows up. His father wanted Fred to be a mechanical engineer.

Fred dreamed of the day when all Shelbyville would echo his praise as the world acclaimed him a great sign painter. But he was to be none of these, for in 1883 after he had been in high school for two years (all the formal education he was to receive from the school masters) his father, ever the nomadic and restless, went off to the wilds of Dakota Territory. There on the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, at the prairie hamlet of Highmore, not far from an Indian Reservation, the elder Goudy settled and went into partnership with a man named Parker in the real estate business, which in those days consisted mostly of the filing and proving of homestead claims. Before long John Goudy sent for his family and when he had been there a year or so he was appointed County Treasurer and later elected Judge of the Probate Court. Young Fred worked as clerk and bookkeeper in the office of Goudy & Parker and he nosed about in the two printing shops of the Highmore *Bulletin* and the Highmore *Herald*. Here for the first time he saw newspapers printed.

There were not many schools of higher learning in Dakota Territory in the year 1884, and anyone who had studied for two whole years in a High School back east (Illinois) was considered as fit material for a fine bookkeeper. So in 1889 when Fred got the wandering bug himself and went first to Minneapolis and later to Springfield, Illinois, he was able to get jobs keeping books in real estate offices. In these he got his first taste of advertising and layout

work, for realtors were then as now, prolific advertisers. Goudy tells how he used carefully to write out fool-proof instructions showing how he wanted advertisements he'd written to look in type. Then he would take them to the printer. What headaches those poor country printers must have had. How skeptically they would look at these elaborate layouts and scratch their heads. But when it was done to Goudy's final satisfaction, they had to admit "It looked all right."

It's a little shocking for modern eyes to look at the state of advertising in the late 19th century. Few persons had ever heard of an advertising agency. The newspapers and magazines were filled with crude, barely readable, bold-faced cries to try this new union-suit (boldly illustrated) or this new thing called a bicycle, or this potent and "triple strength" patent medicine which would cure all ills in creation. Printer's types were so bad and so powerful that they jumped at you from the printed page and socked you in the eye. There was no institutional copy, no market research, no fine art work, and no $100,000 a year advertising men with influence as great as that of a President. Funny looking furnaces and stoves were being shouted about; out-landish cloaks and suits for "ladies"; strange harnesses that hooked over the shoulders to hold up long cotton stockings; and torturous steel-ribbed corsets with long laces. It was a florid, ornate period when men shunned simplicity as they would a disease.

Yet Fred Goudy was trying to write and get printers to set up *simple* advertisements. He had a hard row to hoe. He was making his living as a bookkeeper but he knew, somehow, that he was not cut out to be one the rest of his life. Letters, instead of figures, were surging through his mind. He was unhappy. He didn't know exactly what, at twenty-eight, he wanted to do anyway. He rattled around at loose ends. He knew he was looking for something he couldn't find.

Goudy went to Chicago. The last decade of the 19th century had just begun.

It was in Chicago that matters first began to assume a more definite form. He got a job in a realtor's office. Yet young Goudy had to plead with his employers to let him try something new in an advertisement he wanted to write for a man who had a house to sell out in Massachusetts. Goudy hunted around, got an old woodcut of a country house, wrote some copy and had a simple, plain advertisement set up which contrasted mightily with the garishness of surrounding advertisements. Goudy's ad wouldn't amount to anything, the boss said. But a couple of days after it appeared, a man came in. He said he had seen the advertisement and liked it well enough to go to Massachusetts and inspect the house. To think that the mere words he had written would send a stranger away across the country to look at that house and want to buy it

was an astounding idea to Goudy. It pleased him. It pleased his boss. It proved there was something powerful in the combination of pictures and type and ideas. But it had to be the *right* combination.

Goudy had several jobs in Chicago, one of them with a visionary, high-pressure, financial wizard who operated an investment house and who specialized in raising money for enterprises . . . a man ahead of his time. It's hard to imagine the simple country boy in such a place. But it was a good place, for in it Fred met a person who made him forget the necessity of writing "come-on" advertisements. He met the young girl who was to become Bertha Goudy. He was also startled about this time to have an advertisement he had written accepted for publication by *Printers' Ink*. He felt this to be a good omen. He would work with type.

The World's Fair in Chicago in 1893 had come and gone. Goudy set to learning about type and its use in printing and advertising. He even started a magazine audaciously called *Modern Advertising* with a cover by that other pioneer designer Will Bradley. This helped him get free-lance commissions in advertising and designing. But he was yet to design the first Goudy type-face.

Once a man gets forms into his head, he's gone. There is nothing more disturbing. Whether it be forms of Grecian Columns, forms of perfect human bodies, forms of well-balanced machines, or forms of letters, he'll never get them out. They will never

let him alone, that is, if he's an artist. And Goudy was an artist, though he didn't know it then. For several years in Chicago he had been watching printers' types and the results printers were getting with them. He felt these results were something to weep over. Not only because printers were ill-informed and didn't care, but because the types they had to work with were so bad.

At the end of the nineteenth century type design and printing were at the lowest ebb in history. As many students have remarked that in this murky and deadly era of American art, printing touched bottom. Type was not only crazy looking, but it was defeating its purpose by being impossible to read. Although a new light was shining from the pioneer work being done in England by prophets like William Morris, Charles Ricketts, Cobden-Sanderson and Sir Emery Walker (men chiefly responsible for the great English revival of good types and good printing), few men in America had seen their work and hardly a printer knew of their existence. The day of fine printing... that is, honest, simple and dignified printing... could not have been more remote when Fred Goudy drew his first letters for type. The time was ripe for a man who could lead against the dark elements of ignorance, confusion and indifference and yank printers away from bad work to an appreciation of good work. This man was Frederic Goudy. But he didn't know it.

One summer evening in the year 1895, Goudy sat down by a window and without thinking of doing anything important he drew an alphabet of capital letters about half an inch high. He thought they were pretty good. In fact, he knew they were a darned sight better than those he had seen in specimen books. He sent them to a Boston type foundry. Fortunately there was, at that time, a man at this foundry who knew merit when he saw it; the superintendent, John B. Williams, later vice-president of the Curtis Publishing Company. Goudy wrote a note saying he thought his letters ought to be worth five dollars. We can imagine his surprise when Williams wrote that they would take the alphabet and enclosed a ten dollar check! Well, here, thought Goudy, was the solution to all his problems. No more bookkeeping. He could now do the kind of work that made him most happy, and he could make a fortune. It had taken him an hour to draw one alphabet. For this he had obtained $10.00. Now there were ten hours in a working day—that's $100 a day. Six days in a working week—that's $600. But hold on here—

Anyway, it was better than bookkeeping.

About this time, when he was full of this newborn interest in letters, he met a kin-spirit in a young English teacher, C. Lauron Hooper. They became intimate friends. Goudy had heard about that master of masters, William Morris, the poet craftsman who was doing remarkable things at his

Kelmscott Press in England. A new inspiration was mounting in his mind and of this he talked long to Hooper. Hooper was fired by Goudy's enthusiasm and when he asked Goudy what he wanted most to do, Goudy said, *start a press.* It must be, he explained, a press to do advertising but one founded on the fine craftsmanship of Morris and Ricketts. A big order for Chicago, but Hooper had faith in Goudy. He also had a few hundred dollars. They founded the press and called it The Booklet Press, set up in a space they had sublet in a printing shop at 296 South Dearborn Street. The equipment of this first press consisted of one 8x12 Gordon press, one stone, and a few fonts of type. This was how Goudy became a printer. "When I became innoculated with printers' ink," he says, "I was never again the same." The name of the Press, when they moved into new quarters in the Caxton Building, was changed to Camelot, and that name was used by the Dickinson Foundry for those first letters Goudy had sold them for ten dollars. He shortly drew another alphabet and sent it to Dickinson. It was accepted but, while the Camelot type face was cast and offered for sale, this new one apparently never was. Not all type designs grow up into types. Goudy had a friend in Clarence Marder of Marder, Luce & Company, and for this firm he now drew a private type face, but though accepted and paid for, this too was evidently still-born. It was not very encouraging.

Then the book publishers, Stone and Kimball, came to Chicago fresh from Harvard University with their new ideas and their *Chapbook* magazine. They had heard of Goudy as a workman who loved good printing and knew how to do it. They gave him the job of printing the *Chapbook*. The page was small and Goudy wanted a small yet legible type. He found one in a MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan catalogue called "Original Old Style" but a small face cast on a large body. It would not look close enough when set up. Now Goudy did something no printer he'd ever heard of had done before. He wanted this nine point face cast on an eight point body, which was very much like putting a nine year old boy into an eight year old size breeches. It was against all rules but he got it done. Conservative printers, when they saw the result in the *Chapbook* with its legible, neat, close-fitting type, were astonished. It was the talk of the trade. Fred T. Singleton, then editor of *Poster Lore* in Kansas City, said in the September issue, "Although totally uninstructed in the art of printing, Mr. Goudy took to it naturally, achieved considerable success and turned out work of decided originality. As to what Mr. Goudy will accomplish as a designer, it is hard to predict."

Today volumes of that charming little magazine, the Goudy-printed *Chapbook*, are treasured by collectors. Goudy's success with it was merely some ingenuity coupled with careful printing. And in an

age when there was hardly an iota of either, it was something new. Goudy was showing the way. And he was working hard at it. Oswald Cooper, designer of Cooper type, remembers how Goudy would sit up all night to get a job done on time and to beat the well known generalization that all printers are the world's greatest procrastinators.

The Camelot Press printed some interesting things, among them *The Black Art* by the historian of type, Daniel Berkeley Updike. But the Camelot Press was not to last. A fellow came along (we would call him a go-getter today) saying he could "influence a lot of business," and would they take him in. They took him in. Goudy was not a salesman, but he was interested in good printing. Everything was not all roses and moonlight in the Camelot Press now, and soon the good printer gave way to the entrepreneur. Goudy sold out, went to Detroit and got a job as cashier on a weekly paper, *The Michigan Farmer*. Here he found very little time to draw more type letters but he did make a few and sold some, notably the De Vinne Roman to the St. Louis Type Foundry. But this was no place for a man of letters. It was probably a good thing that he was fired, for it spurred him toward starting in business for himself.

He felt he must now be through with bookkeeping and clerking forever and sink or swim as a freelance designer of types and advertising. He went back to Chicago and opened an office in the Athe-

naeum Building where he began making new letters and lettering advertisements. He determined to go by the code he had formed when, in announcing the Camelot Press he had said, "We hope to inculcate in those for whom printing is done, a love of harmony and simplicity. We propose to become the exponents of a style that cannot be assailed." This was written over thirty-five years ago. It was truly a daring ambition then, as perhaps it is now. It was, however, an ideal that has ever since been Goudy's.

Now in Chicago, as he thought, permanently, Goudy went on working at new letter designs, and hand-lettering ads and even books. He lettered one book by hand, *Denslow's Mother Goose* and the lettering was so attractive that The Inland Typefounders simply copied those letters, made a type of them and christened it, for some reason, Hearst. This sort of thing was to be an irritating factor in Goudy's life, for there was no way to protect original letters and type designs. Goudy's letters were copied far and wide, for which he got no credit and no cash.

He also took jobs at this time lettering advertising for Marshall Field, Lyon & Healy, The Inland Printer, The Pabst Brewery, Mandel Brothers, Hart Schaffner and Marx, all extensive advertisers. It was here that he designed book covers and lettering for the book publishers, A. C. McClurg & Company, The Lakeside Press, and the map-makers, Rand-McNally. And he also designed private type

faces for clients, chief among them the rugged letter for the Pabst Brewery, now a type face known as Pabst Old Style. Advertising manager Powell, of Schlesinger & Mayer who had commissioned Goudy to do the Pabst, then went to Mandel Brothers and for the second time retained Goudy to make a special type design for advertising. Goudy honored Powell by naming this type after him. Goudy drew a number of new designs and sold them, but no type was ever cast from them. The market for new and better type faces was not very brisk, and he received very little encouragement for he was still working in the dark ages of good type.

All Goudy's types so far drawn had been for advertising. He now wanted to design a type face to print fine books. William Morris was a god to Goudy and, like Morris, he wanted to bring to peoples' eyes the image of things with which his heart was filled. He determined to print the finest books ever done in America.

In 1903, when Theodore Roosevelt flashed the first message over the first cable laid in the Pacific to recall William Howard Taft from the Philippines to become his Secretary of War, Frederic W. Goudy, in the village of Park Ridge, near Chicago, was making American printing history with the inauguration of The Village Press and The Village Type. This new type was Goudy's first fine book face. It was another "first" in a larger sense. It was the

first American designed book face to be cut and cast from free-hand, original drawings of a type artist. "A startling innovation in those days when mechanical accuracy was the *sine qua non* of all type, at least in this country," says Will Ransom, historian of private presses. Village Type was born of the drawings Goudy made for Kuppenheimer & Company to use in advertising. For them Goudy received his inspiration in the illustrious work of both Morris and Walker. When the Kuppenheimer people found the cost of cutting and casting was going to be more than they expected, they gave Goudy his original drawings and thus Village Type also had a source in advertising.

Up to this time only two or three other Americans had been designing type faces. It was still thought to be an old European art. The manner of designing a type had been to find one in an old book or hand-written manuscript, enlarge the letters and have a type foundry cut the metal matrices to cast type from. Some designers, like Bruce Rogers, with their own artistic ability to put into type, varied this by sketching over, free hand, the enlargements. However, such designing as Goudy saw it, was hardly more than copying, at the best, the forms of old types and letters already in existence. He felt it did not occur to most designers then that to accept early types and tradition without putting something of themselves into the new designs, was mere affectation. "He must learn," says Goudy, speaking

WILSON'S ROLLING VENETIAN BLIND.

A very DURABLE, HANDSOME, and CONVENIENT piece of Window Furniture. It takes the place of the cumbersom: folding shutters, saving the studding out and boxing, and giving extra room. Rolls from above or below, or in connection with a lower sliding panel admitting either half being closed; running in grooves, it does not shake or rattle, and is a protection against thieves.

IMPROVED ENGLISH VENETIAN BLINDS,

To pull up with cord. (See cut.)

WILSON'S ROLLING STEEL SHUTTERS,

Fire and Burglar Proof.

"The Hartford" Folding Blind and Wilson's Flexible Car Blinds.

SEND FOR ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE.

J. G. WILSON, 527 & 529 W. 22d Street, New-York.

VENETIAN BLINDS
MADE TO MATCH ANY STYLE OF FINISH BY
VENETIAN BLIND CO.
BURLINGTON VERMONT
242 CANAL ST NEW YORK CITY
31 PEMBERTON SQUARE BOSTON
HILL'S PATENT INSIDE SLIDING BLIND.

TAINED GLASS

J. & R. LAMB, ...
59 Carmine St. New-York.
New designs for Fire Screens, suitable for wedding presents. All forms of House and Church Work. Send for hand-book.

BURT'S SHOES.

SEND TO

E. D. BURT & CO.

257 FULTON STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

For their Illustrated Catalogue and Price-list. Goods forwarded by mail or express. All orders will receive prompt attention.

Please mention THE CENTURY.

Those who are about to build should send for my **Portfolio of Cottages.** The work contains 24 beautiful plates of Cottages, mostly of moderate price. 72 illustrations, three to each plate, comprising Perspective, First and Second Floor Plans. Elegant case, loose plates, and practical matter; size, 10x14 inches. Price, post-paid, $5.00.

J. H. KIRBY, Architect,
No. 18 Larned Building, Syracuse, N. Y.

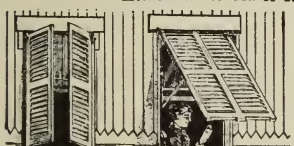
PARQUET FLOORING

NATIONAL WOOD MFG. CO.
OF 16 EAST 18TH STREET NEW YORK
REMOVED TO 129 FIFTH AVE NEAR 20TH ST.
WOOD CARPETING—LESS EXPENSIVE THAN OFFICES &c.
CIRCULARS & ESTIMATES ON APPLICATION

THE "AUTOMATIC" BLIND AWNING FIXTURE,

TRADE MARK.

Attachable to Old or New Blinds on Frame or Brick Houses.



The very best blind-hinge and a perfect awning fixture. No cloth to tear and wear out. No iron frames to shake and rattle.

Blinds instantly converted to Awnings!

Awnings instantly converted to Blinds!

No skilled labor necessary to apply them. A child can operate them. Indispensable for Summer hotels and dwellings. Rooms always cool and shady. Many thousands in successful operation.

SOLD BY THE HARDWARE TRADE.

Sample set sent to any address, express paid, on receipt of $1.00. State if house is frame or brick.

F. O. NORTH & CO. Sole Proprietors and Man'f's,
BOSTON, MASS.

Advertising of the early 1900 era

THE
OLD AND THE NEW
A FRIENDLY DISPUTE
BETWEEN JUVENIS & SENEX

BY
THEODORE LOW DE VINNE

WITH A NOTE BY
FREDERIC W. GOUDY

MARLBOROUGH, N.Y.
THE VILLAGE PRESS
1933

A Goudy title page

of the type designer, "not to imitate masterpieces, but rather to follow the tradition on which masterpieces are reared."

In 1903, when Goudy designed the Village Type, his aim was to make a useful thing beautiful as well as useful. For the Village Type he made a free hand drawing on paper, each letter separately, and in the right proportion, after a close study of how these letters had to fit in relation to each other *in type*. He was thus infusing into letters something of his own vigor and conception of beauty, and yet basing them on the limitations that tradition and use had imposed.

All this was remarkable heresy in 1903. The few men doing good book work in America were lost in a desert of mediocre work of the majority. Bruce Rogers, Carl Purington Rollins, Daniel Berkeley Updike, and Thomas Cleland were then all working in Massachusetts. To the man on the street, to say nothing of the average commercial printer, these names meant nothing. The world was not consciously waiting with open arms for Frederic Goudy to give it better type-designs and finer printing! Goudy might have found some consolation in what Stanley Morrison, leading English typographer said: "The good type designer knows that, for a new fount to be successful, it has to be so good that only very few recognize its novelty. If readers do not notice the consummate reticence and rare discipline of a new type, it is probably a good letter." The

world did not even know that in Chicago in 1903 was a man about whom John Clyde Oswald, speaking twenty years later would say, "Of all those identified with printing today, the name of Goudy is the only one that will be generally remembered a hundred years from now." Goudy was the man to bridge the gap from the great Italian type designers of the fifteenth century who had made the first Roman alphabet, to the present day.

Now appears on the scene young Will Ransom. He wanted to learn about type and type designing, but when he had gone to the Art Institute in Chicago he found they could teach him nothing about either. They sent him to Goudy. Here was the master Ransom had hoped to find. When two printing enthusiasts get together, the result is usually a Press. Many years afterwards, in speaking at the exhibition of Village Press work (given to Vassar College by Mitchell Kennerley) Goudy remembered: "A young man turned up from a town in the state of Washington which was outlandishly named Snohomish. Those were the days when, as a wit of the time said, a young man would start a press instead of keeping a dog." This wit must have been an Englishman.

Will Ransom, the young man from the far West, had three hundred dollars. Goudy had the drawings he had made for the Kuppenheimer type. They both had courage and ambition and a strong mutual interest. Of all this the Village Press was born. The

Press was set up, on one hot July day in 1903, in a cleared-out space in Goudy's barn at Park Ridge. There wasn't much equipment: one hand press, some type. But there was something infinitely more valuable in intangibles. Goudy and Ransom said, in their first announcement now scarce (a modest seventy-six copies were printed July 24, 1903) that "The founders of the press intend to make beautiful books of those things in literature which they enjoy . . . the books the printers have in mind will be strong and dignified, beautiful too, but of the whole rather than any one part. This strength will be a feature of their production." The Goudy credo again!

That the two young founders of the now famous Village Press lived up to the promise of their prospectus, many collectors of Goudy's work will attest. How they ever did such good jobs with so little tangible equipment, the Lord only knows. They tell how they worked madly and forgot to wind the clocks. All hours looked alike. Goudy says they were like the surgeon who, explaining his high charge for removing a cataract, said he had spoiled a thousand eyes learning to do it.

Picture the scene. Printers reading this will understand, because they know today that fine printing must be done in the proper temperature and a dust-free, light place. There were Fred Goudy and Will Ransom working night and day in a little space cleared out of an old barn, a draughty place

where in winter the snow and rain sifted through, and in summer dust and dirt collected. It was a place with no thermostatic control, no air conditioning, no proper heating. It was a place where there was plenty of confusion and disappointment but also enthusiasm. Yet out of this queer place came handsome books, for both men had a love for pure craftsmanship.

Their first publication was, happily enough, the *Essay on Printing* by William Morris. Goudy designed the book, Ransom set the type, both of them did the presswork and Mrs. Goudy the binding. Then came Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel*, and Lamb's *Dissertation on Roast Pig*. Mrs. Goudy now took to setting type, for as Fred has said, she was a born craftsman. One day when he was in Chicago trying to earn some money to buy paper and ink, Bertha actually worked the press and printed in a red initial, with perfect register. No easy task with a hand press, as printers know. Now that Fred and Bertha were able to set the type, do the press work and bind the books, they bought out Will Ransom's interest and became full owners of the Village Press.

The Village Press was a mobile outfit. In 1904 it started off on its wanderings that were to last until 1923 when Goudy settled it down at Marlboro-on-Hudson, New York. Its first step was eastward. In Hingham, Massachusetts, there was, in 1904, a group called The Hingham Society of Arts and Crafts where loom weaving and other crafts were

carried on. Goudy took the Village Press and Village Type to Hingham where, surrounded by other craftsmen, he went to work, finishing Morris' *The Hollow Land*, a book begun at Park Ridge. Then came Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, Kipling's *Gypsy Trail*, *Lowell's Poems* (for the bibliographer P. K. Foley) and *Massachusetts: An Address* by Charles William Eliot, for which Goudy, when he wanted to give a copy to the Harvard Library some years afterwards, had to pay five times the publication price. Here too were printed pamphlets, broadsides and folders for the Hingham Society, all set in that first Village Type. There were other fugitive things now lost.

But Goudy was no salesman. Money and food were often scarce, yet, indefatigable worker that he is, Goudy kept on printing and drawing new letters. He also had the opportunity, being near the great libraries in Boston and Cambridge, to look into the work of famous type men and printers of the past. It was at Hingham that an incident occurred of which Goudy likes to tell. One day a "prospect" for some books came into the shop. After they had talked and Goudy had interested him in good printing, he noticed it was noon and, without thinking, invited the man to lunch. Mrs. Goudy noticed both the men coming toward the house, and sensing what had occurred, began a frantic search thru the near-empty cupboards, knowing that dinner was, at best, to have been a slim affair. There was little food in the

house, and no money, but at last she discovered a can of corn and a bag of flour. With these as material, and knowing no alternative, she quickly stirred up an oversized batch of corn fritters, feeling that what the meal lacked in variety, she would make up in quantity. For syrup, she boiled down brown sugar with water, and as they sat down to dinner, still lost in discussion, she served them sizzling corn fritters. It seemed there was food for a dozen men, but rapidly the great heap of fritters began to dwindle. Mrs. Goudy breathed a sigh of relief as the guest found time, between re-helpings to praise her culinary skill. The meal was a success—for the guest remained, bought the books and left a generous check.

Yet in spite of pleasant interludes the Hingham sojourn was short-lived. Evidently Fred Goudy the craftsman didn't fit into a "society" of craftsmen. The funny thing about individuals is that you can't organize them! Besides, Goudy was now ready for the "big time" and the big town. Although he did not know it, it was time for New York. In 1906, just as the fiery Roosevelt I was giving the world a treat by acting as a peace-maker at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Goudy arrived in New York City.

Goudy is fond of saying that his success is largely due to luck. Apart from other things we have been talking about, his success is due to his strong capacity for making friends. It was friendship with Mitchell Kennerley that was later responsible for

the creation of Goudy's first well known type face, Kennerley Old Style. This type caused a bright furore in the world of books, printers and advertising men. *Kennerley* was the first type made by an American that English printers accepted and are still using. For 500 years Europe, birthplace of printing, had been the fount of all inspiration and knowledge of good types. Now a fine book face was born in America! Kennerley type took hold. Its success was international. A British authority (and catch the British praising things American unless they are worth it) had called this type "the most beautiful type put within reach of English printers since the first Caslon began casting about the year 1724." That was a pretty strong statement, for he seemed willing to sweep aside practically all the type design in his country for more than 200 years in favor of this new American designed face. It was, indeed, somewhat of a novelty in English recognition. Another authority on printing and on literature and art as well said, "It is a big thing to create a type face that may live through centuries. Artists paint pictures, and we look and are pleased; write poems, and we read our way to ecstasy; compose music, and in listening we are inspired; but a really beautiful type face, that combines simplicity with practicability, that conforms to the untranslatable spirit of its own age, becomes much more a part of the daily life of every one of us, than any picture, or poem, or musical composition."

When Goudy designed Kennerley type, he had been in New York City for about five years. He had set up his press on the twelfth floor of the old Parker Building on Fourth Avenue and Nineteenth Street. Still designing letters, drawing covers for books, writing ads, printing books, (Goudy, as I have said, was no salesman) he did not yet make much money. He was never able to earn a living as a book printer. One day funds got so low that, in order to get from near Columbia University where they lived, down to the Parker Building, he and Bertha had to shake down their son's bunny bank for two nickels. But on that same day in walked, unheralded, Henry M. MacCracken, the father of the present head of Vassar College. In Goudy, Dr. MacCracken found a kindred soul. They talked. Dr. MacCracken stayed and looked at the fine books and finally bought seventeen dollars worth. Seventeen dollars! Noon had passed and no lunch. Dr. MacCracken took his books and walked toward the elevator. Goudy says that he and Bertha didn't wait to take the elevator down—that was too slow. They took the seventeen dollars, rushed out, and almost slid down the back stairs, beating Dr. MacCracken down by several seconds. But this good luck was not to last. A sudden catastrophe befell the Village Press and the Goudys. One night a fire destroyed the entire Parker Building. All the equipment, the presses, the only Village type in existence, the only complete set of Village Press books, all Goudy's proofs of new type

Goudy at Deepdene, 1932

A BROADSIDE

SHOWING TYPES DESIGNED BY FREDERIC W. GOUDY, IN USE BY THE MARCHBANKS PRESS, NEW YORK

ABCDJ
pabcdefg
[Kennerley 72 point]

ACMQR
gabcdefy2;
[Kennerley 60 point]

ADEGNTS
pabcdefghijk
[Kennerley 48 point]

ALTHOUGH
a variety of opin-
[Kennerley 36 point]

·WITHIN A DECADE·
1911—1921

THE VILLAGE TYPES displayed in this broadside, [all designed & cut since September, 1911] are novel & probably unique in the annals of Typography as they are the work of one man—a student of the best in the older forms of letters, both classic & typographic. Mr. Goudy's drawings are interpretations, not copies of earlier forms; the designs of an artist who is a printer. He follows the practice of the early printers, who, aiming primarily to please themselves, produced types of marked personality. His highest ideal is to retain in his types the essential root forms of the best letters of the past and adapt them to the conditions & needs of the present. His studies in type design have "enabled him to restore to the Roman alphabet much of the lost humanistic character inherited by the first Italian printers from the scribes of the Renaissance."

We have all of these Goudy types in large founts. As Mr. Goudy is associated with this Press our clients may have the benefit of a combined knowledge and experience in the production of fine printing.

THE MARCHBANKS PRESS

¶THIS PARAGRAPH EXHIB-

GOUDY
[Forum Title 48 point]

DESIGNS &
[Forum Title 36 point]

TYPE·EXPRESS
[Forum Title 30 point]

QUAINTNESS &
[Forum Title 24 point]

OFFER PRINTERS WHO
[Forum Title 18 point]

DESIRE NOVEL EFFECTS IN
[Forum Title 14 point]

THEIR WORK A QUALITY SELDOM
[Forum Title 12 point]

FOUND·FORUM·THE FIRST CLASSIC TYPE
[Forum Title 10 point]

SENATUS POPULUSQUE·ROMANUS·DIVO·TITO DIVI·VESPASI
[Hadriano 24 point]

NICHOLAS JENSON, A FRENCHman, was sent to Mainz in 1458 by Charles VII to learn the new art of printing. He was

to the individual by

[KENNERLEY 30 point]

WHOM THE ART OF printing was first discovered, all authorities concur

[KENNERLEY 24 point]

IN ADMITTING THAT PETer Schoeffer was the person who invented cast metal types, having learned the art of cutting letters

[KENNERLEY 18 point No. 2]

FROM THE GUTTEMBERGS; HE is also supposed to have been the first who engraved on copper-plates. The fol-

[KENNERLEY 18 point]

LOWING TESTIMONY IS KEPT IN the family, by Jo. FRED FAUSTUS of Aschaffenburg: "PETER SCHOEFFER, of Gernsheim, perceiving his master FAUST's de-

[KENNERLEY 16 point]

SIGN, & BEING HIMSELF ARDENTLY desirous to improve the art, found out [by the good providence of GOD] the method of cutting[*incidendi*] the characters in a matrix,

[KENNERLEY 14 point]

THAT THE LETTERS MIGHT EASILY BE singly cast, instead of being cut. He privately cut matrices for the whole alphabet. And when he showed his master the letters cast from these matrices, FAUST was so pleased with the contrivance

[KENNERLEY 12 point]

THAT HE PROMISED PETER TO GIVE TO HIM HIS only daughter CHRISTINA in marriage, a promise which he soon after performed. But there were as many difficulties at first with these letters, as there had been before with wooden ones; the metal being too soft to support the force of the impression: but this defect was soon remedied, by mixing the

[KENNERLEY 10 point]

pt. and not offered for sale generally. Goudy Newstyle. Cast to order only.

THE MAZARIN BIBLE was so called because it was a copy in the library of Car-

[KENNERLEY ITALIC 24 point]

DINAL MAZARIN WHICH first attracted attention and led bibliographers to inquire into its history. It illustrates a remarkable fact

[KENNERLEY ITALIC 18 point No. 2]

FOR THE INVENTION OF THE Italic character we are indebted to Aldus Manutius, by birth a Roman, who erected

[KENNERLEY ITALIC 18 point]

A PRINTING OFFICE IN VENICE 1496, where he introduced Roman types of a neater cut, and gave birth to that beautiful letter which is known to most of the

[KENNERLEY ITALIC 16 point]

NATIONS IN EUROPE AS 'ITALIC'; though the Germans, and their adherents, show themselves as ungenerous in this respect as they did with the Roman, by calling it 'Cursiv,' in

[KENNERLEY ITALIC 14 point]

ORDER TO STIFLE THE MEMORY OF ITS original descent, and deprive the Romans of the merit due their ingenuity. In the first instance it was termed Venetian, from Aldus being a resident at Venice, where he brought it to perfection; but not long after

[KENNERLEY ITALIC 12 point]

IT WAS DEDICATED TO THE STATE OF ITALY, TO prevent any dispute that might arise from other nations claiming a priority, as was the case concerning the first invention of printing. Italic was originally designed to distinguish such parts of a book as might be considered not strictly to belong to the body of the work, as Prefaces, Introductions, Annotations, &c., all

[KENNERLEY ITALIC 10 point]

P · SCHOEFFER, ASSISTANT TO

[GOUDY OPEN 36 point]

JOH. GUTENBERG AND THE INVEN-

[GOUDY OPEN 30 point]

TOR OF TYPECASTING, also a number of important improvements in printing,

[GOUDY OPEN 24 point]

WAS BORN IN GERNSHEIM about 1430. He was a student in Paris in 1449, & was distinguished for his excellent penmanship. The

[GOUDY OPEN 18 point

DATE THAT HE RETURNED to Mentz is not known, but, as he was married to Christina Fust in 1455, it is probable that his con-

[GOUDY MODERN 18 point]

NECTION WITH JO. FUST HAD BEGUN some years before. When Fust in 1455 took legal possession of the printing material used by Gutenberg, he at once made P. Schoeffer

[GOUDY MODERN 14 point]

HIS PARTNER AND TOGETHER PUBLISHED IN 1457 the celebrated Psalter, which is remarkable for containing the date, the names of the partners & the assertion that it was produced by the new art of printing. In the same year, the Durandus, a folio of 160

[GOUDY MODERN 12 point]

THE MARCHBANKS PRESS, 114 EAST 13TH STREET, NEW YORK CITY

SEPTEMBER, 1921

designs, drawings of old and new letters . . . everything was destroyed. The work of years had gone up in smoke, or had been melted down and run into the cellar.

Now at forty-three Goudy was right back where he had started. There was no type, no press and no money. Up to this time he had designed fifteen type faces and twelve of these were in use. He had drawn his first type design for the machine for the Lanston Monotype Company. But still, he was little known in America. Shortly after the fire, he set up a cramped cubby-hole office in the corner of another office. But a place where there was not as much as a composing stick was no place for a printer. Goudy wanted to touch type and think type in order to draw new type designs. But most of all, he now realized that he wanted to learn more. He got the scholar's bug.

One evening in 1909, as he was walking with Bertha on the beach at Brighton, Goudy looked out across the Atlantic and saw in his mind's eye the land he had always wished to visit. The cradle of printing, the seat of learning, the place where his great master Morris had worked. And there too would be the great Caslon foundry, the Bodleian Library, the British Museum, and other repositories full of the typographic treasures of all time. And there too would be men from whom he could learn. So he said:

"I wish I could go to Europe."

Mrs. Goudy was direct. "Why don't you?" she

said. That settled it. He went to Europe and it was there that his dreams assumed new form in his mind. Up to this time he had not thought of himself as a type designer. He was more a printer of fine books. The European trip shifted the emphasis. He came back full of new ideas and ready for his best work.

Some day when a future historian writes the complete history of American publishing and of arts and letters, they will have to reserve a place for Mitchell Kennerley. Many writers have already paid tribute to his publishing genius and taste, not the least of them being Mr. Christopher Morley, who took the occasion to say in his book *John Mistletoe*, ". . . such a history would have to record that Kennerley, more than any other editor, was first to remark and put between covers (either in *The Forum* or in books) much of the finest stuff of our day . . . Kennerley was unquestionably the first modern publisher in the country in the particular sense in which the word is used nowadays."

Mitchell Kennerley with his keen sense for good work saw that Goudy was a man who loved the virtues of another day and was successful in putting them into modern life with his types and printing. Mitchell Kennerley gave Goudy his opportunity. He began to do book title-pages, drawn by hand; initial letters and ornaments for books; publisher's imprints and marks; the cover of *The Forum Magazine*; covers for books; lettered advertisements, and many other kinds of work. It was also in Kennerley's offices

that Goudy got to know people in the world of art and literature; Bliss Carman, Richard Le Gallienne, Edgar Saltus, Thomas Mosher, Edgar Lee Masters, William Marion Reedy, and many others. He felt he belonged in this sort of world.

Kennerley, Goudy's first patron, was about to publish a book of short stories by H. G. Wells entitled *The Door in the Wall*. He had retained Goudy to design the book. Goudy had, at first, a type page set up in eighteen point American Caslon. But when he looked at this specimen page (it was a large book about eleven by fifteen inches) it bothered him. He saw the open, loose quality that the American foundry, bastard Caslon had and still has. He knew it was wrong. But how to make it right? Goudy explained how he wanted the page more compact, more solid, more closely knit together and more readable. But there was no appropriate type to be had to make such a page.

"Well, I can make one," said Goudy.

"Go ahead," said Kennerley. This was the chance that Goudy had been waiting for. He had been inspired while in Europe by the handsome type that old Bishop Fell had given the Clarendon Press at Oxford several hundred years ago. He had this in mind but as he started to sketch out the new letters, an original expression of beauty and utility seemed to appear. There was no trace of Fell in it. Goudy kept the intrinsic strength and dignity of the Fell type in the back of his head, but he was now work-

ing to an end. That end was to create a new type face that would make a well-knitted page of type and yet be the most legible type in existence. The drawings for the Kennerley type were completed February 18, 1911 and were obviously named after Mitchell Kennerley. Mrs. Goudy began at once to set by hand specimen pages in the new type for the Wells book. Mr. Kennerley said, "Mr. Goudy did not himself realize when he had completed his task, how fine a thing he had given to the world."

At the same time Goudy began drawing a new letter based on his studies of the original Roman letters cut in stone on the Trajan Column at Rome during the first century. One week later this type was completed. In this singularly short time Goudy had given birth to his two famous types. He shortly moved to a new house in Forest Hills, Long Island and there he set up the Village Press again and now a Village Letter Foundry where he sold the two new types, Kennerley Old Style and Forum Title. Here for the first time in modern history a type designer was selling his own types.

Now kept at work by Kennerley and others, Goudy was past the danger of want. Knowing where his next meal was coming from he settled down to turn out new type designs and to print more fine books for Kennerley and others. It was here that he made his first contribution to scholarship in his two books, *The Alphabet* and *Elements of Lettering*. This mid-

western expatriate, with no "formal education" was now to give to the science of paleography its finest modern book, not only in its sound grasp of history and principles of lettering, but also in the plates of letter designs Goudy drew for the books. In *The Alphabet* Goudy again stressed his code. "As there is no recipe for design, neither is there one for the making of letters; but some knowledge of their history and development is necessary, as well as a taste enlarged by study and analysis of beautiful forms, together with the ability to *feel* the charm of well designed legible pages." In *Elements of Lettering* Goudy kept to the same theme. "Beauty is the inherent characteristic of simplicity, dignity, harmony, proportion, strength."

The Alphabet published by Mitchell Kennerley went through six editions and is still the classic hand-book on that subject. One has only to look at the small library of other books on letters published during the past fifty years to see how Goudy's work stands out. Just a page from one of his books beside a page from one of others, tells the story. Goudy's feet were on the ground. Goudy was a true, natural scholar, because he did not try to write about things he had never done. Most of the other authors were professors who wrote deep erudite treatises on theory or gentlemen who could not possibly have drawn a good letter to save their necks. One proud author of a lettering book had, as a frontispiece, a lovely photograph of himself and his beautiful curly-headed

daughter. Under it was the caption that "she helped me with the book." So it appeared. Some of these letters were pretty good for a ten year old!

At Forest Hills Goudy felt sure at last that type designing, not fine book printing, was his real work, and while he kept the Village Press, it became now more of a designing and experimental laboratory. He started, with the late Hal Marchbanks as publisher and printer, a magazine called *Ars Typographica* devoted to fine printing and type, really the forerunner of all present day magazines about typography. In looking at this attractive publication now it is astonishing to see how far ahead of its time it was, not only in editorial opinion, but in the way it was designed and printed. It was too good for its time. Out of some one thousand subscribers only two hundred were printers, the rest being bibliophiles and typographic collectors.

But national recognition was not yet at hand. One American writer on types and printing history, William Dana Orcutt of Boston, had published a book on the subject and passed over Goudy. America wasn't ready to recognize Goudy. It was from England that his first real recognition came.

In the year before the World War, Fred Goudy went to Europe again. It was odd how this came about. Friendship again . . . luck again? Who knows? Goudy's types were now making him friends he had never seen. Kennerley and Forum were his ambassadors. One friend the new types made was pub-

lisher Earle of *The Lotus* who had seen the Kennerley type in Goudy's catalogue and wouldn't rest until *The Lotus* was set in it. He was the first man to use it after its initial use in Kennerley's American edition of the Wells book. Earle greatly admired Goudy. While in Europe in 1912 he had shown specimens of Goudy type to the Caslons, descendants of the great Caslon of the eighteenth century, still running a type foundry in England. They at once saw merit in Goudy's types. They very carefully intimated that they would like to see this Mr. Goudy and some more of his work. Earle told Goudy and he went to see them. It did not take long for the Caslons to buy from him the right to make and sell Kennerley Old Style, Forum Title and Goudy Old Style types. This last (later called Goudy Antique, and now Goudy Lanston) was named Ratdoldt by the Caslons in their Goudy catalogue.*

English printers accepted Goudy's types at once. Kennerley Old Style and Forum Title were everywhere. Mitchell Kennerley recalls a letter from his brother in England which reported that one day while visiting a small printer in Northern England, he (Kennerley's brother) was surprised to have the printer show him Kennerley type. Its fame and use

*In this connection it is interesting to note that some years later Goudy heard the Kelmscott Press was offering for sale the Albion printing press that had been used by the great Morris himself in printing the Kelmscott *Chaucer*. He bought it and first set it up in the Anderson Galleries, New York, then owned by Mitchell Kennerley. Here Goudy gave exhibitions and printed on it the only separate edition of Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Renascence*. Here was the printer who, back west, had dreamt about Morris, admired his work and his ideals; now *he* had Morris' own press.

had spread even into the hinterland. Authorities on typography and journals of the trade talked about nothing but Goudy's Kennerley type. The English edition of Updike's history of types gave Goudy tribute.

All this news traveled back to America. America was being taunted for failing to see a good man under her own nose. At last Goudy's own country woke up and recognized him . . . a belated honor.

The American Type Founders Company, then virtually a monopoly of type-founding in this country, at last realized there was a designer named Goudy. They hired him and he designed Goudy Old Style, inspired by letters on a painting by Holbein. For this, called the father of all Goudy types, they paid him $1,500 and from it, one hears, they sold many thousands of dollars worth of type. Then they took this one design and, as Milton MacKaye aptly remarks, "made three types sprout where one had grown before." They cast Goudy Old Style and from the small caps they enlarged a new type they called Goudy Title. Then they had their own designer draw a bold Roman and a bold Italic from the Goudy Old Style. Then their designer tooled out the middle of these types to make an outline type they called Goudy Handtooled. Thus three new faces sprang up without benefit of or to Goudy, and started the Goudy family of types that today occupy a catalogue of their own. This displeased Fred

Goudy, though it was all perfectly legal. Fred felt he was not planting type designs to grow up and multiply into new ones he had nothing to do with. He "got wise." As he grew older he became a better business man and thereafter determined to sell type designs on a different basis.

In 1918 Goudy designed Hadriano which, as *Time* Magazine records, "Started with a rubbing from an inscription in the Louvre in Paris when the guards were not looking, finished by three A.M. the next morning." The type was not copied, however, but built up, someone has said, "as prehistoric animals were constructed by anthropologists from a rib bone." In 1920 he took a step forward when he became art director of Lanston Monotype Machine Co.

Goudy had now caught up with the times and was making designs for a machine that could turn out many pages of type while a man was hand-setting one page. Recognition of Goudy by the Lanston Monotype Machine Company started a new era in machine types. Before this time new types had been designed for the foundry which cast type for hand-setting; from now on the best designers worked for the machine-made type concerns. Both the Monotype Company and the Linotype Company began to blossom out with better type faces.

Goudy's first design for Lanston was the Garamont, modelled from the caracteres de l'Universite of the Imprimerie Nationale. These letters, inspired by Claude Garamond's cutting, proved to be the

first machine-set type sensation in history. They say that in a few weeks over $65,000 worth of this one face was sold. Not only was it a success for the commercial printer, but fine printers and amateurs everywhere fell in love with this type. Books and magazines were set in it. *The American Mercury* was the first national magazine to employ Garamont and a beautiful magazine it was then. Goudy's alliance with a machine-set type company was a fortunate one for it enabled him to make type designs that would be available to all printers far and wide... and this was what he wanted.

In 1923 Goudy found the haven he had sought all his life. Because he had been lucky (so he says) and years before had bought a lot at Forest Hills, New York, for fifty dollars down and because real estate had boomed and allowed him to sell for good money, he was able to buy at Marlboro-on-Hudson a beautiful old colonial place built about 1750. He calls it Deepdene. There is a deep dene or glen down one side of the wooded grounds and at the bottom runs a brook. It flows quietly under an old arched stone bridge and then falls swiftly over high rocks in a white spray. Right beside the falls is an old mill where cotton cloth was once made with the power of an overshot waterwheel. This was to be the home of the Village Press and the Village Letter Foundry. With the aid of native workmen the mill and the house were restored to their original eighteenth

century state. Both are set down in the middle of beautiful, quiet grounds, shadowed by tall trees, truly a place to work. It is also a Mecca for printers and type men who come from all over the world to see Goudy. It was at Deepdene that Goudy, at sixty, an age when most men stop work, began work of a new kind. He set up a foundry of his own.

It was here that Goudy decided to cut letter patterns and cast the metal type himself, instead of leaving it to some commercial foundry that might not bother with the accuracy "you can't see." Once the processes and the machines were worked out and set up, Goudy, with the aid of his wife and son, did the job. Goudy still works here on this old-world estate very much as a careful artisan would have worked centuries before. Of course he has machines the old workers didn't dream of, but the spirit is the same and so are the results.

When Goudy designs a new type face for the Monotype machine he is not satisfied with drawing the letters on cardboard and sending the drawings along to the Company. He feels he has to go through the whole series of operations; cast the actual type, have a page set up and then print something with it so he can see just how the new design is going to look *when printed.* That one point is important. It takes infinite patience and skill to do all this. After he has the proof, perhaps the tail of a "Q" is not just as he wants it. He goes way back—there's no erasing in type design—and makes a new nine-inch letter with

pencil on cardboard, cuts it out, makes a metal pattern with the first pantograph machine, a brass matrix with the second pantograph, takes the matrix downstairs and casts a piece of type in a machine that throws hot lead against the matrix, sets this type up, puts it on a press and takes a proof. All this to change the tail of that plaguy "Q." Talk about the capacity for taking pains!

The New York newspapers, in celebrating one of Goudy's birthdays with editorials said, "There is not a literate person in the United States today in whose behalf he has not labored." There is not much one can add to that. But there are two more things to be said before we leave Goudy, now over seventy, but still hard at work at Deepdene, full of international honors, esteemed by all.

One of the things to be said is this; when the distinguished printer George W. Jones got up to speak at the occasion of the presentation to Goudy of the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, he paid this subtle and laconic tribute to America's type master. "Fred Goudy," he said, "has never done anything to hurt typography." When George Jones said that, he could only have been thinking of the harm that *has* been done to the art of typography . . . harm in the form of careless, badly conceived, illy-executed type faces . . . harm in the fancy, bizarre, novelty type faces of the moment and not of all time. Mr. Jones could have been thinking

of the harm done by poor, feeble, slipshod and ignorant printing through the years . . . the kind of printing that Fred Goudy himself characterized by these words, "Bad printing in the past was due largely to bad types; today both to bad types and bad use of good types."

That Fred Goudy has never done printing any harm, is of course a delightful way of saying that Fred Goudy has done it all good. He has made types so individual and interesting that another English critic remarked that Goudy has "restored to the Roman alphabet much of the lost humanistic character inherited by the first Italian printers from the scribes of the Renaissance."

Once, at Deepdene, when there were half a hundred pilgrims there to see Goudy at work (many were young women), one enthusiastic young creature called brightly; "Oh, Mr. Goudy . . . do tell us . . . where do you get all your ideas for letters?"

An hour or so later some of Goudy's friends who had stayed on after the place had quieted down were talking about this consuming curiosity of the public. Goudy laughed, "People come up here and look carefully through the old mill. They see it full of machines but they keep on looking for something else. I try to explain to them that I use the machines to reduce my letter designs into type. But they don't believe me. They act as if I had something hidden around the place . . . something I won't show them. When I convince them that this mill and my hands,

are all I have to show . . . they go away convinced that letter designing is solely a job for a fairly good machinist . . . and nothing more."

Later we fell to discussing an article someone in Europe had written about type designing. This was the only time I ever saw Goudy really ruffled. A week before we both had attended a luncheon of New York typographers and there the wise young men had roundly criticized the work of an older designer because it was traditional! This English article said, among other things, "The plain fact is that progress in type design is only possible to a craftsman disciplined to deny himself the luxury of personal feelings . . . as this is too much to demand of an artist, it is clear that type designing is not an artist's job."

Goudy rose. "In the name of all the Gods that be," he said, "whose job is it, if not an artist's job?"

On one hand the New Yorkers in America had laughed at tradition, and on the other, men in England said that tradition was the only thing. It's a queer world.

I AM not setting up shop as a critic of Goudy's work, but this story would hardly be complete without a suggestion of what, in the opinion of one writer on the subject, Frederic Goudy's job has done for American typography. Mr. Paul Johnston, author of *Biblio Typographica*, in one of the last issues of the *Fleuron* published perhaps the most carefully rea-

soned estimate of what Goudy has accomplished. He pointed out how the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed a certain impersonality in American typography because American printers were obliged to import types and styles from Europe, and even when punch-cutting began in the United States it stemmed obviously from England or Scotland. Thus the first one hundred and fifty years of American printing were purely derivitive—the styles of type and their manner of use were indeed wholly foreign. Even in the deadly nineteenth century when typography went to pot, America steadily continued to import new "typographical horrors," as Mr. Johnston aptly calls them.

Of course Morris' work, as Johnston shows, was felt in America especially at Boston through the medium of Updike and Rogers but, as I have mentioned earlier, the work of the Boston school was barely heard of by the common printer in this country. In fact the run-of-the-mill printer for commerce, inspired by the degenerating influence of that Belial of American typography, Elbert Hubbard, was pursuing a course diametrically opposed to the pioneer work of Updike, Rollins and Rogers. Mr. Johnston emphasizes Goudy's work by stacking it up against this background. "It was the part of Frederic W. Goudy to help the general printer in America to understand and to learn from the movement which began with Morris. And it is to Mr. Goudy that American printing owes much of the strength and

charm which may be claimed for the common as well as the fine work today."

Mr. Johnston's summing-up of Mr. Goudy's case is of special interest.

"Mr. Goudy's work," he wrote, "is most impressive against the background of American typography during the past thirty years. It began just at the time when the consolidation of type foundries in the United States tended towards the standardization of type design. With the elimination of competition, there seemed to be little encouragement of creative work, and as the years passed the craft of type design almost reached the point of stagnation. The revival of fine printing was not strong enough more than slightly to affect the situation. Mr. Updike imported from England and the Continent several types he considered of better form than he could obtain in the United States and commissioned two or three new designs. Mr. Bruce Rogers, more able than anyone else to produce attractive work from the meagre assortment of types American typefounders can supply, also sought the best of European letters, and he designed two types as a better conquest of his own ideal of typographical variety. But Goudy felt the need for creative work in the service not only of the limited edition and the private patron, but of the general printer in town and country. American printers have shown by their response to Mr. Goudy's lead that they are not slow to accept his fine material and more than ready to use it worthily."

Fred Goudy did not become a faddist and, making handwork his fetish, disappear into the eighteenth century, nor did he remain wholly in the twentieth century and refuse to look at anything over ten years old. He did what all good artists find that inner necessity of doing: he took good principles and inspirations of the past, assimilated them and made good things for today.

Perhaps it is fitting that Ernest Elmo Calkins have the last word here about Fred Goudy.

"The first time I saw Goudy he was an Old Master. He brings to his work the fine, unselfish spirit of an earlier age." And Mr. Calkins spoke pure headlines when he finished by saying, "He is an old style face on a modern body." There, indeed, is the secret, if there be any secret, of Frederic W. Goudy.

Postlude

IT IS A SAD TASK to record the destruction of The Village Letter Foundry, known to many as *Deepdene*.

On the 26th of January, 1939, at half past four on one of the coldest mornings of the year, Frederic Goudy was rudely awakened by the shriek of a fire siren. Looking out of the bedroom window, against the dawn he saw a bright red glow behind the mill. The bowl of sky was lit up, throwing out in sharp relief the black hulk of the mill. Something was burning fiercely and to Goudy it looked like the house across the creek. But as he watched, a sheet of sudden flame burst out of the west end of the old building itself. He walked back and sat down on the bed. He knew all too well what it was . . .

He hurried into his clothes. Stunned by the shock of discovery, he found logical thought impossible. Confusedly he pulled cold shoes over naked feet and then tried to draw on his stockings. He only knew that he must get out and see if anything could be saved. He could not help but think of that other fire thirty-one years before, when The Village Press and all that he and Bertha had owned had been completely wiped out by the destruction of the old Parker building in New York. As he sat there in the

bedroom at Deepdene he heard a pounding on the front door downstairs. A young man from the neighboring Pagentine family was trying to awaken the household to tell them where the fire was. Soon young Frederic rushed up the stairs and Goudy and his son stood there together in the cold air of the open window.

The fire had been discovered by Henry Berean, who worked at Velio's greenhouse on the hill south of Deepdene. Berean had telephoned the Marlborough Hose Company. In a very few minutes the firemen were there, stringing 350 feet of hose to a little pond in Jew's Creek. But just as fast as the icy water struck the roaring mass of flame it started freezing and disappeared in clouds of hissing steam. The boards and timbers of the old mill had been drying for 150 years. They burnt like fine tinder.

Fred Pesevento, another neighbor from across the creek, saw the fire before it had spread throughout the building. He said it began in the lower story where the oil-burning furnace was. In a short time, the blaze had gained such a head start there was no stopping it. The firemen played two hose on the ruins for about four hours and were able to prevent the flames leaping across to Goudy's house or to the nearer houses across the creek. Alice, young Frederic Goudy's wife, made a desperate and heroic attempt to enter the burning mill and rescue some of the precious drawings and matrices, but the flames and intense heat drove her back.

By the time Goudy could get dressed and walk across the snow-covered grounds to stand a safe distance from the scorching heat, there was little left of the old mill where, for sixteen years, he had done his best work. He stood for a little while shivering from the bitter cold and nervous reaction. Then, faced with the realization of how utterly helpless he was to do anything, he turned, walked back to the library of the house and watched his beloved workshop disappear in the flames.

At nine o'clock the once beautiful, eighteenth century structure Goudy had so carefully restored, was a black skeleton, fantastically embellished with white icicles. Built in 1790, and known to local people as the Buckley mill, it had been taken over in 1811 by a weaver named Buckley and used by him until 1861 for the manufacture of cotton cloth and satin. A painstaking craftsman, Buckley had, in 1831, won the American Institute Award. Besides giving his name to the mill, he had begun there the tradition for fine work which Frederic Goudy had so fittingly continued. But on this January morning in 1939 there was nothing left but a gaunt, charred gable, rearing drunkenly into the air and held up by twisted bits of dimensional timber in the roof. Once again, for Fred Goudy, years of work had gone up in smoke or had been melted into fused metal in the cellar.

As Goudy remained at the library window watching, it seemed to him that this could not be his affair at all. He felt curiously detached from the awful

thing that was going on . . . it could not be happening *to him*. At Deepdene, since 1923, he had spent the most interesting and happiest days of his life. Here were born the designs he had hoped would make printing better . . . here were the tools he had gathered, invented, made . . . and the machines he had worked with. And the whole place was heavy with memories of Bertha and his many friends. "I knew that something had gone from me that can never be regained," Goudy said.

He ate his breakfast and was driven to the station by Alice where he took the ten o'clock train for New York. Gathering his papers and designs he went to keep his engagement there just as if nothing had happened. "It might have been worse," he said as he got on the train, "after all, we're still here." Later in New York City, still hardly reconciled to the enormity of the disaster, Goudy was able to say, "It's not really all gone up in smoke. The effect of my work, its influence on printing and typography, can't be destroyed."

Totally destroyed with the mill were the free-hand drawings for most of the 107 Goudy type faces as well as all the matrices for some 75 Goudy fonts.

While there is a considerable amount of type on the market already cast from these matrices lost in the fire, it is probable that as soon as this is worn out no more can be made unless it is possible, by photographic enlargements of the type now in existence, to create new patterns and matrices from them. Fortunately the drawings for Goudy's 107th type face

just completed for the University of California Press had been mailed a few days before the fire to the Lanston Monotype Company. Another slight but mitigating circumstance lay in the fact that Goudy had recently sold to the Monotype Company twenty of his designs and had sent them these drawings and matrices. Saved too were a few Goudy patterns and drawings on exhibition at Columbia University. Destroyed beyond recovery, however, were thousands of dollars worth of matrices for Goudy type faces and some five tons of type already cast. Gone were the famous matrice engraving and pantograph machines, the type casters, lathes, drill presses, milling machines, and a wealth of general printing and mechanical equipment, along with a monotype caster and the hand press on which William Morris had printed some of the Kelmscott Press books. This historic and priceless relic crashed through the burning floors and landed some fifty feet below, badly broken, on top of an old vault in the cellar. Also consumed was a collection of rare books Goudy had unfortunately carried to his workshop the day before. There was only $8,000 worth of insurance.

In addition to all these things, gone forever were some fifty galleys of new chapters and material for a revised edition of Goudy's book, *The Alphabet*. It had been standing in type for some time, awaiting a promised introduction by Christopher Morley. To this Goudy had planned to add the text of *The Elements of Lettering* with new material and changes which, to-

gether, would have made a comprehensive and notable book on lettering. Painful was the realization to Fred Goudy, that these fifty galleys of type had been the work of his son Frederic who had begun to take an interest in type composition and who had worked so hard to do this job well. Fortunately a proof had been taken of the type. Another loss of no mean proportion was the type for a new book to be called *Recollections of B. M. G.*, but by lucky chance this too existed in proofs and is now being re-composed by Howard Coggleshall for an early printing.

The total loss, however, is a grevious one that can never be measured in terms of money.

The Smithsonian Institute had planned to set up a permanent exhibit of Goudy's work at Washington, and another collection of his designs and working materials was planned for the 1939 World's Fair in New York City. Goudy had also been dickering with, and was about to sell his remaining designs to the American Type Founders Company who, after forty years, had caught up with the rest of the world in recognizing Goudy's importance as a type designer. The fire, in destroying the original drawings and master matrices of Goudy's types, perhaps put an end to these hopes and this long-delayed recognition. Realizing this, the loss was all the harder to accept in Goudy's usual philosophical fashion. "It's a body blow," he said. "At seventy-four it's quite a problem to make a new start . . . if I were only ten years younger . . ." But then he added with the

typical Goudy touch, "I don't see much of anything I can do unless someone is foolish enough to commission a new type."

Some weeks later, in thinking about the disaster, he said, "A thing I can't seem to comprehend is my feeling for certain of my types . . . of some I seem to have no regrets at their disappearance. Not particularly those which I regarded as less good than others, but some which had been accepted generally by printers. Strange as it may seem, I regard most poignantly the loss of my "Ampersands" drawings for Typophile article "Ands & Ampersands"; my drawings for "Mediaeval" I feel are a distinct loss, yet their duplication as type would be comparatively simple. It is the loving satisfaction and pride, the subleties in the drawing of certain characters as I worked that I recall for a type, which, regardless of public opinion, I believe to be one of the few original types ever drawn. And then my 'Friar'. I can't begin to express my great pleasure as each letter took form . . . not a great type, of course, but to me a beloved brainchild; and the drawings for the 'Californian' Italic which for simple dignity, simplicity and, I hope, beauty, retain a high place in my memory."

In thinking of the past years of struggle Goudy also said, "I probably got more praise during my lifetime than any other type designer. But the trouble is, you can't take it to the bank and draw on it. I have given forty years of my life to the service of printing. I should have been able to retire ten years

ago, but printers are fickle people. At a time when I needed the help of printers they failed me. Instead of using native type, they import it from Germany. How can you establish an American school of type design, unless you give American designers a chance to live? I'd have starved if I had been forced to depend on the printers of the United States."

In spite of the tragic loss Goudy has sustained in this fire, he will go on designing even though he no longer has the type-founding and matrice cutting equipment developed over the years by his genius. But his inordinate courage, mainstay at other crises, is still strong. As long as paper and drawing pencils are available, Goudy will go on adding to the 108 faces now to his credit. He also plans to get at the job of writing, postponed for so many years. He aims, he says, "to add a studio-alcove to the new corner of my library where I can secure a good north light, and find a secluded corner for work and yet easily accessible to my books, and take up again the *drawing* of types as long as the candle holds out to burn." Here he may write the long-promised autobiography.

After the reluctance of American printers in the past to recognize and use Goudy's work, it is pleasant to record that contemporary printers immediately rallied to his support. As this book goes to press, a Goudy fund is being established by *Printing*, that printers of the United States may, in some degree, make up for the lamentable loss at Deepdene.

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Colophon

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