

Contents of the Exhibition Room

"The exhibition room, across the hallway in the new building, contains the following special collections:

"The Morgan Collection of Virgils, presented by Junius S. Morgan, Esq., '88. This fine collection includes many rare and valuable editions and is the largest of its kind in this country and one of the largest in the world. Among its treasures is the first edition of Virgil, the editio princeps, printed at Rome in 1469 and one of the rarest books in existence. Another famous volume in the collection is Grolier's own copy of the poet, printed and bound by him in 1541. The collection numbers in all some 659 volumes and is valued at more than \$50,000.

"The William Horace Morse Collection of Japanese netsukes (small carvings), comprising 475 examples, the great majority of which are in ivory. This collection, valued at \$10,000 is a gift to the University from the family of the late William Horace Morse, and is now temporarily exhibited in the Library.

"The Hutton Collection of Death Masks, presented to the University in 1897 by the late Laurence Hutton. This unique collection of 'portraits in plaster' is the largest and finest in the world and the only one, in fact, that may be dignified by the term collection.

"Mr. Hutton became interested in death masks in the early sixties, when he was then living in New York. One afternoon in a bookstore he saw a mask of Benjamin Franklin that had been found in an ash barrel on Second Avenue and on exploring this barrel discovered another mask of Franklin, one of Wordsworth, one of Scott, and one of Cromwell, also casts from the skulls of Robert Bruce and Robert Burns. With these Mr. Hutton's collection was begun. The mask of Dean Swift is the only one in existence. It was *originally* the property of Trinity College, Dublin, but was stolen from the College Library in 1853. A large reward was offered for its return, but nothing was ever heard of it. Several years ago Mr. Hutton came across this rare mask under a pile of rubbish in an old curiosity shop in London. The most valuable mask in the collection is that of Sir Isaac Newton. It was made by Roubilliac and is one of the two in existence. The original is in the rooms of the Royal Society, at Burlington House, London. The collection numbers in all some seventy-four masks.

"In addition to these collections there are many other things of interest in the exhibition room. Against the eastern partition and near the entrance hangs the Doctor of Laws diploma conferred upon James Madison by the College in 1787. About the walls are the framed congratulatory letters, from institutions of both the old and the new world, addressed to the University upon the occasion of the celebration of her one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. Among the portraits now in the exhibition room may be noted one of Judge William Paterson of the class of 1763, a framer of the Constitution and one of Princeton's most noted sons, which faces the entrance from the south wall, bequeathed by his grandson, Judge William Paterson of class 1835; a portrait of ex-President Francis Landey Patton, by John W. Alexander, west wall; and one of James Ormsbee Murray, first Dean of the University, north wall. In one of the cases near the entrance may be seen an interesting collection of Princetoniana, including the Madison family Bible which records the birth of James Madison; the original manuscript copy of Madison's speech, delivered upon the occasion of his inauguration as President of the United States, March 4, 1809; President Edward's Hebrew Bible; a manuscript sermon in the autograph of President Burr; and an exhibit of early College publications. In another case at the farther end of the room is an exhibit of letters and publications relating to Aaron Burr, the younger, of the class of 1772. The large case against the western wall contains in part a series of autographs of many of the early presidents of the College, as well as those of some of her more noted sons, and a set of the exquisitely printed publications of the Grolier Club. The cases in the central part of the room at present contain an interesting collection of Babylonian and Assyrian seals and tablets, and those against the southern wall an exhibit of early illuminated

texts and manuscripts, and papyri.

“Upon public occasions, such as Commencement and the days of the big games, it is customary to allow a limited number of persons, accompanied by a guide, the privilege of visiting the stacks and the tower. From the tower a splendid view may be had of the University grounds and buildings, the town of Princeton, and the surrounding country, which will fully compensate the visitor for the fatigues of the ascent.”

J. R. Williams, *The Handbook of Princeton* (New York: 1905).

Notes: