

## What the Reviewers and Critics have to say about this Book

Dr. LAWRENCE C. WRIGHT, of the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island, says:

The book on fore-edge paintings before me does admirably a job which, I now realize, badly wanted doing. . . . I know that hereafter I shall never look at a fore-edge painting or read a description of one without focusing upon it the light of these chapters on the charm of the paintings, the historic development of the practice, and its place in the adornment of the book.

It seems to me further that, by relating this practice to the interests and enthusiasms of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such as the cult of the "picturaeque" in nature; Mr. Weber has made significant a book-art too often dismissed with condescension by scholars and very serious bookmen. For me, at least, this book takes a place hitherto empty in the literature of bibliography. It is rich in book lore of a reconnoitre sort. Another service to the subject is the inclusion of so many admirable colotype reproductions of actual fore-edge paintings. . . .

The Anthosensen Press has done a good job in its specialty, that is, aiding the author in the clear and pleasing presentation of his matter. This is another distinguished book to its credit.

(Quoted from a review in the *Colby Almanac*, April 1949.)

Dr. SAMUEL M. GREGG, of the Art Department in Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, says:

Fore-edge decoration began in England in the mid-seventeenth century. . . . Its quality at the end of the eighteenth . . . is so high that it is strange that so little has been published on the subject. . . . Fore-edge painting well deserves the consideration finally given it here. Half of the statement by a well-known American book collector that fore-edge painting is "pretty but petty" has been amply refuted by Mr. Weber in this book, written with the careful research born of the discriminating curiosity which we have come to expect of him. . . . The book . . . covers the history of fore-edge painting from its origin . . . to . . . living masters of the art. . . . The appendix with its catalogue of . . . paintings in American collections . . . is worth a volume in itself. . . . Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the book is that indicated in its subtitle: "Notes on the Artists, Bookbinders, Publishers, and Other Men and Women Connected with the History of a Curious Art."

. . . The literary quality of this incidental information relates the book in spirit to the essay rather than to the compendium of knowledge. In a way the book is no more a descriptive handbook of fore-edge painting than Isaac Walton's *Complete Angler* is a manual of fishing. . . . Nearly every page has some singular information which makes the book a delight not only for the bibliophile but for every lover of the curious. In format the book reflects the usual taste and skill of The Anthosensen Press. The title-page is especially elegant with its little woodcut by Bewick. . . .

(Quoted from a review in the *Colby Library Quarterly*, May 1949.)

Copies of *A Thousand and One Fore-Edge Paintings* may be ordered from your bookseller or from the COLBY COLLEGE PRESS, Box 282, Waterville, Maine.

1001  
Fore-Edge  
Paintings  
—  
WEBER

# A THOUSAND AND ONE FORE-EDGE



# PAINTINGS

WITH NOTES ON THE ARTISTS CONNECTED WITH THE HISTORY OF A CURIOUS ART

By Carl J. Weber

PUBLISHED BY THE COLBY COLLEGE PRESS

COLBY

This picture on the front of this wrapper shows a splendid Taylor-and-Hesssey painting on the fore-edge of a book in the Library of Congress. Notice that, when the book is closed, the "gnawing" of the gilt on the edges of the leaves can be seen; and when the book is opened and the leaves are "fanned," the painting hidden under the gold is brought into view. This fore-edge painting was reproduced in the February 1948 issue of *Holiday*, and is here again reproduced by special permission of its editor. Reprinted from *HOLIDAY—A Curtis Publication*. Copyrighted 1948 by THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY.

fore-edge

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June 1/1949

↓  
To Mr Charles Sawyer [J. S. Sawyer]  
With my deep appreciation  
for giving me the opportunity of  
adding many beautiful fore-edge  
paintings to my collection  
Sincerely  
Estelle Sawyer

June 28<sup>th</sup> 49

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No. 1. *A Country Mansion, painted on the Fore-Edge of a Book of Common Prayer, printed in Paris by Didot "and sold by W. Edwards and Sons, Halifax, 1791." This vellum-bound book is now in the Estelle Delaney Collection at St. John's Seminary, at Camarillo, California.*

# A Thousand and One FORE-EDGE PAINTINGS

*With Notes on the*  
 ARTISTS, BOOKBINDERS, PUBLISHERS  
*and other Men and Women connected with the*  
*History of a Curious Art*

BY  
 CARL J. WEBER



WATERVILLE, MAINE  
 COLBY COLLEGE PRESS

1949

## *About this Book and its Author*

Some years ago COLBY COLLEGE received by gift a private library in which there were a number of beautifully bound books with water-color paintings on their fore-edges. When these volumes reached the hands of the Colby Curator of Rare Books, he tried to inform himself about the history of decorating costly books in this fashion, but he discovered that little had been written, and that presumably little was known, about these mysterious hidden paintings. Professor Weber thereupon set about investigating the whole subject of fore-edge decoration. This book is the result. He visited scores of libraries and inspected thousands of paintings, from the Pierpont Morgan Library in the East to the Huntington Library in the West. In the Estelle Delaney Collection in California he found the richest and most varied assemblage of fore-edge paintings to be seen anywhere. The present volume makes available to other students of books, to collectors, booklovers, and librarians, and to the general reader, the information gleaned from Professor Weber's researches. The illustrations which accompany his text will help to initiate the reader into the delights and the surprises that await one who "fans" the leaves of a fore-edged book.

Dr. Weber is the author of a critical biography of Thomas Hardy, *Hardy of Winton*, and of a critical study entitled *Hardy in America*. He is the editor of the *Jubilee Edition of A. E. Housman's Shakespearean Lull* and of the edition of *Letters of Sarah Owen Leaven* which was recently acclaimed by the American Institute of Graphic Arts. He is the compiler of a *Bibliography of Jacob Abbott*, published last year, and (with his wife) the compiler of a *Bibliography of Sarah Owen Leaven* which is to be published by the COLBY COLLEGE PRESS on the centenary of Miss Leaven's birth, September 5, 1849.

**Title of Book:** A Thousand And One Fore-Edge Paintings With Notes On The Artists Connected With The History Of A Curious Art.

**Author:** Carl J. Weber

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