

**CATALOGVE OF ORIGINAL AND  
EARLY EDITIONS OF SOME OF  
THE POETICAL AND PROFE  
WORKS OF ENGLISH WRITERS  
FROM LANGLAND TO WITHER**

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Catalogue of Original and Early Editions of Some of the Poetical and Prose Works of English Writers from Langland to Wither by Grolier Club

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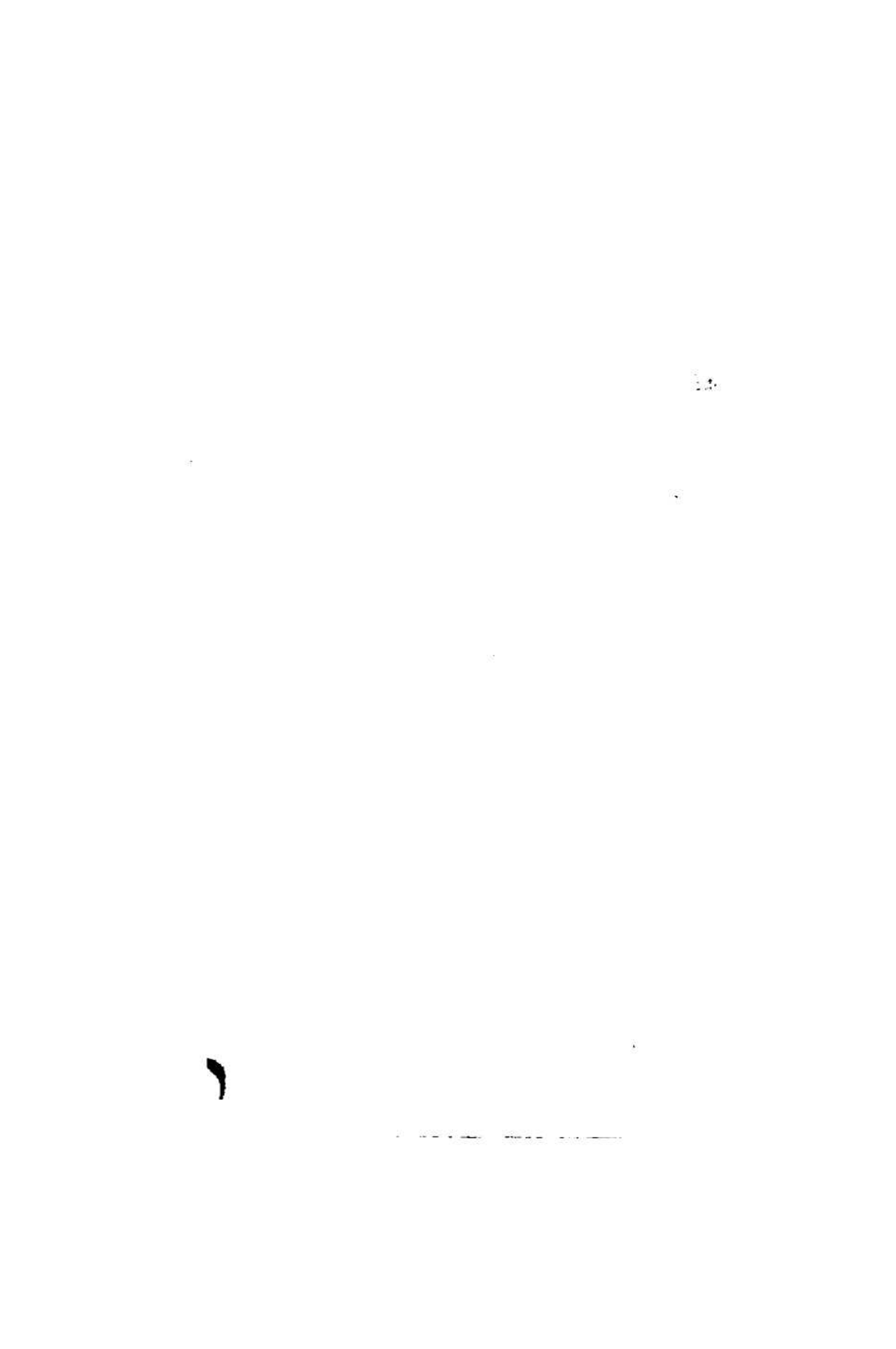
**GROLIER CLUB**


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*With Collations & Notes, & Eighty-seven  
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'Being a contribution to the Bibliography  
of English Literature*



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## PREFACE.

*It is an undoubted fact that the increasing study of English literature has, in the past few years, developed new interest in the original editions of those authors whose writings form the foundation of that literature. This is true not only of England but also of America, where the eagerness of buyers for this class of books bears witness to the truth of the statement. It can hardly be necessary in a work primarily addressed to the members of the Grolier Club, so many of whom are noted collectors, to speak of the value and peculiar interest that are associated with first editions, not only when historically considered, but also from the fact that they form in most instances the original source to which all questions of text must be referred. It is not, however, from a literary or critical point of view that this work has been prepared, but rather for the use of the bibliographer and collector.*

*American collectors of old English literature are not very numerous, though their number is constantly increasing, but it seems just to add that for enthusiasm and devotion they are not excelled by any class of collectors in the land. They have always labored under many disadvantages, not only in being so far removed from the source of supply, the London market, but suffering further in not having at command*

for comparison and study the vast treasures contained in the British Museum and other English public libraries. They have thus been more easily disappointed by the catalogues of some English booksellers and auctioneers whose tendency to over-describe and quietly omit all mention of imperfections has been unfortunately but too common. Notwithstanding these discouragements American collectors are active and intelligent, and have secured very many of the best books that have come on the market in recent years. Their influence is decidedly recognized in the London auction rooms, and their willingness to pay good prices for fine examples is not the least factor in the general advance that has taken place in the value of old English books. The books described in the following catalogue are with very few exceptions the property of members of the Grolier Club, and most of them were exhibited at the club in the spring of the present year. The committee having the exhibition in charge intended at first to issue merely a brief catalogue of authors and titles, but as the work progressed it was decided to change the plan and give full collations and descriptions of the books, together with such brief notes as the nature of the work required. It was, moreover, thought that the book would possess greater value to collectors if facsimiles of the titles of a number of the more valuable and scarcer works were given. This feature, while common in French bibliographies, has never been extensively employed in any English work of this character; and it is hoped that their appearance here for the first time will be welcomed by students and collectors as a decided help.

In regard to the selection of volumes, it is but fair to say that as the committee has been to a great extent limited by the material available in the libraries of the members of the

*club, it must be distinctly understood that this work does not pretend to be in any way exhaustive; it is no more than a contribution to English bibliography, though care has been taken to make the collection as far as possible a fairly representative one, and it is believed that no author of note has been entirely omitted. The only exceptions are in the departments of theology and the drama,—the first from lack of general interest in this class of literature among collectors, and in the case of the drama for the reason that it is hoped at a future time to take up this class by itself. Every volume in this collection has been personally examined, nothing is included that has not been carefully collated by some member of the committee, and whenever possible the collation has been verified by reference to two or more copies. The collations given by Collier, Corser, Huth, Locker-Lampson, and Hazlitt have been compared, and whenever deviations have been found the fact is noted. The committee is conscious that with all the care taken errors have undoubtedly escaped notice, but it is hoped that they are neither numerous nor serious. Should this publication meet with the approval of the members of the club, and especially of those who as collectors of old English literature are best able to judge of its value, it is the purpose of the committee to continue the work, and to issue further volumes covering other departments and periods of English literature.*

*It only remains to thank those members who have so freely placed their books at the disposal of the committee, and who have been so uniformly kind and courteous in assisting in the preparation of this work.*

*Grolier Club, April, 1893.*