

**A DESCRIPTIVE
CATALOGUE OF
THE BOOKPLATES**

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A Descriptive Catalogue of the Bookplates by George W. Eve & George H. Viner

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GEORGE W. EVE & GEORGE H. VINER

**A DESCRIPTIVE
CATALOGUE OF
THE BOOKPLATES**

BOOKPLATES BY GEORGE W. EVE

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA



Yours very sincerely
G. W. E. C.

A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE
BOOKPLATES

DESIGNED AND ETCHED
BY
GEORGE W. EVE, R.E.

WITH A BRIEF NOTICE OF HIS CAREER AS AN
ARTIST AND A FEW COMMENTS UPON
SOME OF HIS OTHER WORK

BY
GEORGE H. VINER

UNIV. OF
KANSAS



THE AMERICAN BOOKPLATE SOCIETY
KANSAS CITY
1916

UNIV. OF
ALABAMA

INTRODUCTION

The object of the ensuing compilation is to place on record a list of the many Bookplates executed during the all too-brief career of an artist whose early training at the Herald's College enabled him to specialize so successfully in these fashionable and fascinating revivals of the present day.

With that training, it is not remarkable that the majority of his bookplates were armorial, nor that several years elapsed before a "pictorial" was attempted. Indeed, not until 1907, when he began to work in conjunction with Mr F. G. House, did the latter become at all numerous. Even then they were almost invariably etched from Mr House's designs, but commissions executed prior to that date, and notably for Mrs Rimington Wilson, Lady Warwick, Lady Jersey, and Miss Bostock, afford a sufficient indication that the success of the artist did not depend upon heraldic interpretation alone.

Criticism has been freely expended upon Mr Eve's preference for the omission of heraldic "tinctures," and it must be admitted that the omission adds considerably to the difficulty of identifying his anonymous armorials, and, as a matter of course, all unnamed "coats" and quarterings also. But it was ever his object to achieve broad effects, and to get away from that over-minute finish of detail which in any but the most skilled hands has done so much to

weaken the virility of heraldic charges, and to detract from the effectiveness of heraldic compositions as a whole.

Writing himself upon this very subject in his *Heraldry as Art*, he gives these reasons for his preference, viz:

On flat spaces, if the lines are sufficiently pronounced to be legible, they may lead the eye in a direction which is not helpful to the composition, and on modelled charges or crests they have a flattening and confusing effect that is very disagreeable.

Such were his views, and whether they be accepted or not in their entirety, I venture to think that few will dissent from the verdict, that in his case, at any rate, the end did justify the means.

I think also it will not be denied, that the most striking features of his work are vigorous drawing coupled with a perfect sense of balance and proportion. If there be anything to add, it is consummate skill in the modelling of lettering, and in displaying it to full advantage of space and effect.

That Mr Eve's work should have appealed as strongly, as it undoubtedly did, to one who belonged to so different a school of artistic expression as the late Mr Gleeson White, is no little remarkable, and suggests the expediency of quoting the dictum to which he gave expression when publishing the special Bookplate Number of *The Studio* some years ago. This is what he said:

Employing etching usually, he gains a certain force which copper-plate engraving rarely, if ever, achieves. His drawing is crisp, his floral forms recall the best examples of Gothic carvings, his sense

of composition and spacing leaves nothing to be desired. In short, within the limits of the armorial plate he is in the very front rank; to say more would be needless, to say less would be ungracious in face of the plain facts evident to any observer.

If such be the considered judgment of one so well qualified to give an opinion, but whose predilections as regards bookplate art must have been all in favour of "black and white" methods, what must be the judgment of his brother-experts of the etched line, those of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers? Surely, the answer is supplied by the fact that upon being graciously accorded the Royal Charter, they selected Mr Eve of their number to execute the new Diploma — their own, so to speak, "Insignia of Office."

Second only to Sherborn, his work remains to give pleasure to the numbers who value it, and to generations to come, for an almost complete collection, not only of his bookplates but of his other etchings, has been stored in that treasure-house of wonders, the British Museum.

It was originally intended to omit from the list those bookplates which bear other than his own or the signature of Mr F. G. House, but a wish having been expressed that the whole of Mr Eve's bookplate work should be recorded, they have been included. Nevertheless, it will be noticed that when working under another signature, the artist, more often than not, showed a disposition to modify or disguise his customary characteristics both of expression and design.

Concerning the majority of the anonymous book-

plates, believed to have remained unsigned, enquiry has failed to elicit information. Several were exhibited at the "R. E." in 1908, and the catalogue notified that they were for sale. That they were ultimately finished and now bear the names of owners is at least probable, search for the copper plates having proved unavailing.

My thanks are due to Mr F. G. House for information courteously and ungrudgingly afforded concerning the bookplates which bear his signature, and others which were executed for Messrs Truslove & Hanson through his mediation. Without them, as will be evident enough, the catalogue would have been sadly deficient. To him also, and to Mrs Eve I am indebted for two of the copper plates used for illustrating this volume, and to Mrs Loring, Mrs Sharp, Mrs Tempest, and Lady Stamfordham for having so kindly placed their copper plates at my disposal (at Mr House's solicitation) for the same purpose.

I must also express my obligations to Mrs Eve for the loan of the admirable likeness from which the frontispiece has been reproduced, and for the opportunity of examining a number of the original drawings and sketches, and thereby ascertaining the dates of several "plates" which otherwise could not have been assigned to the years to which they rightly belong.

For the style and production of the volume I can claim no credit; all that is due must be assigned to Mr Alfred Fowler who, to my great satisfaction, has relieved me of any trouble and responsibility in