

**A HANDBOOK OF THE
COLLECTION OF PRINTS AND
ART BOOKS IN THE NEW
YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, MCMII**

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A Handbook of the Collection of Prints and Art Books in the New York Public Library, MCMI
by S. P. Avery

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S. P. AVERY

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New York Public Library



PRINT EXHIBITION GALLERY
Lenox Building

A HANDBOOK OF THE
S. P. AVERY COLLECTION
OF PRINTS AND ART
BOOKS IN THE NEW
YORK PUBLIC
LIBRARY
MCM I

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IN MEMORY OF THOSE DEAD,
AND WITH THANKS TO THOSE
STILL LIVING, WHOSE ARTISTIC
SYMPATHY AND INTEREST WAS
OF SO MUCH AID IN THE FOR-
MATION OF THIS COLLECTION.

S. P. A.



INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

MR. SAMUEL P. AVERY showed a fondness for prints from early boyhood, and made scrap-books of whatever pictorial material came to his hand. He became an engraver on wood, and practised that art until 1865 or 1866. Then came the call to take charge of the American art exhibit at the Paris Exposition of 1867. That appointment, and the opportunities which it afforded, determined him to abandon engraving and engage in the business of dealing in works of art. This brought greatly increased facilities for the gratification of his love for prints, particularly etchings; and as lack of means prevented him from collecting the works of the old masters, he concluded to confine himself to the productions of living or recent artists. His business soon lay with the foreign artists, especially the French, and he gradually made the acquaintance of a large number who either etched, engraved or lithographed.

Mr. Avery made it a point to secure one or more examples of the work of nearly every contemporary artist whom he had met or of whom he had heard. The result is the present collection of 17,775 etchings and lithographs, representing 978 artists, and offering a comprehensive view of the state of these arts during the past fifty years, particularly in France, where they have been most cultivated. While the work is mainly by Frenchmen, other nationalities are also represented, particularly the German, Dutch, Belgian and English. Sometimes, as in the case of Barye, or of Daumier, the one plate here listed is the only known etching by the artist,

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and frequently two or three prints quite adequately represent an artist's scope. But in a number of cases Mr. Avery made virtually complete collections of the productions of the most noted individuals. Personal and continued relations with many of these artists ripened into life-long friendships. As a result there will be found here a large number of proofs specially selected for Mr. Avery, with manuscript notes as to "states," rarity, etc., many of them being presentation copies with friendly dedications. This personal element, of course, adds to the value and interest of the collection.

A noteworthy example of completeness is found in the works of Charles Jacque. This absolutely unique collection was originally Jacque's private one of four hundred and twenty subjects, with various "states," showing the progress and variations of the same, these being all of the plates executed by him from 1830 up to the time when J. J. Guiffrey's catalogue was prepared and printed in 1866. This collection was sold to an English amateur in 1867. Later on it passed into the possession of Mr. Avery, who added "states," and even subjects not described by Guiffrey, and forgotten by Jacque, who had certified that the Guiffrey catalogue gave a complete list of all his etchings. Jacque himself, as he continued to etch, laid by from time to time choice impressions of each new plate, with his signature and notes. A supplement to the Guiffrey catalogue appeared in 1884, and impressions of all the plates therein described were duly acquired by Mr. Avery, as well as such others as Jacque executed up to the time of his death in 1894. In addition to the etchings there are original drawings, lithographs, engravings on wood and on steel, after designs by Jacque, etc.

Sir Francis Seymour Haden was also especially helpful in enabling Mr. Avery to complete his collection of that artist's