CHARLES BENNETT GULLANS 1929-1993

A tribute by John Espey

Charles Bennett Gullans, a member of the UCLA Department of English since 1961, died Tuesday, March 30, at the UCLA Medical Center of respiratory failure approximately three weeks after undergoing major surgery for cancer.

The most notable aspects of Professor Gullans' career were the range, depth and variety of both his achievements and his learning. He was the author of six collections of original poetry, two bibliographies of contemporary poets (J.V. Cunningham and Turner Cassity), the definitive edition of the English and Latin poems of the Scottish poet, Sir Robert Aytoun [1570-1638], two volumes of translations -- one of prose, Last Letters from Stalingrad (1962), one of poetry, The Wrong Side of the Rug (1986) -- and added greatly to our knowledge of American book design with a 1968 checklist that was ultimately expanded into an illustrated monograph, Margaret Armstrong and American Trade Bindings (1991). At the time of his death he was nearing completion of a detailed supplement to Sidney Kramer's classic bibliography of the American turn-of-the-century publishing house of Stone + Kimball, later Herbert S. Stone + Co.

Charles Gullans was born in Minneapolis on May 5, 1929. At the age of 16, while still a high school student, he entered Hamline University (St. Paul) on a Dean's Scholarship. The following year he transferred to the University of Minnesota. He graduated in 1948, awarded his B.A. with honors. His formal education was interrupted by a year of elementary school teaching in Eunice, New Mexico, after which he returned to Minnesota as a graduate assistant in the Department of Humanities, earning his M.A. during the spring of 1951. In the fall of the same year he entered Stanford University as an acting instructor in English, receiving both a creative writing grant and the Newhouse Honors Scholarship. The following year he held a Fellowship in Creative Writing.

During the next two academic years (1953-1955) Gullans was based in England, holding a Fulbright Research Scholarship, with the unusual renewal of a second year, as a member of King's College, University of Durham. After his return to America he received his Ph.D. from Stanford in the spring of 1956, his dis-
sertation dealing with Ayton. Meanwhile, he had begun his teaching career in 1955 at the University of Washington, first as instructor and then assistant professor of English until 1961, when he accepted UCLA's offer of an assistant professorship.

As a teacher, Gullans was both severe and generous, holding his students to exacting standards, but happy to give unlimited time and personal attention to those who were seriously interested in their work. The same was true in connection with his colleagues, especially younger members of the department who came to him for information and advice. The range of his knowledge was vast and he shared it willingly. At an early point in his life he had considered taking up a teaching post in Japan. He immediately began teaching himself the language with the help of a bi-lingual dictionary and an elementary textbook. Not content with this, he plunged into the study of Japanese history and retained for life a detailed knowledge of its major periods. This appetite for learning characterized his approach to all fields of interest that attracted him, and they were many.

As a poet, Gullans was fortunate enough during his Stanford years to join the circle of talented young writers who studied under Yvor Winters. He became a master of traditional metrics and classical rhetoric. At the same time, he found his own voice. It ranged from direct and unsparingly honest statements of endurance under life's ironies to joyous celebrations of friendship enlivened by good wine, good food, good talk. These qualities inform his first collection, *Arrivals and Departures* (1962), and continue through to his last, *Letter from Los Angeles* (1990), which was awarded the Lipton Prize by USC.

In 1978 Gullans satisfied a long held desire by founding The Symposium Press. He used it for publishing limited editions of his friends' work, designed and produced by a variety of America's finest printers. The pleasure this gave him became one of his chief joys, made memorable by many a select publication party.

Gullans was a discriminating collector of English prints, American pottery, and West Coast plein-air-painting. He kept current with contemporary literature, and for relaxation avidly read murder mysteries. His active memberships included the Council of the Scottish Text Society, many bibliographical societies, the ACLU and the NAACP. He is survived by his sister, Lorre J. Mehlinger of Laguna Hills, and two nephews, Richard E. Mehlinger of Boston, and Charles F. Mehlinger of Hilton Head, South Carolina.

Although Charles Gullans and I met face to face for the first time in the autumn of 1961, when he joined our Department of English, we had already had formed for us a kind of relationship that should hearten everyone who still believes in the power of the printed word. Early in his career, Charles came close to accepting an offer to teach in a mission-connected elementary school in Japan. Characteristically, he began to teach himself the language and plunged into the complex-
ilies of Japanese history. One of his friends -- apparently the sort of person who thinks that China and Japan are interchangeable -- suggested that Charles read a small book written by the son of a Presbyterian missionary to China. This book recorded the life of a warmly affectionate family, but at the same time its undertones sounded a satiric note on the folly of introducing middle-class American mores into an ancient civilization like that of China. Thus it was that Charles read Minor Heresies, my first published book, and our first meeting came when he stuck his head in at my office door and asked what the second line of Gau lei tzu mei li jen loo mung sounded like. He was referring to what my sister and I had thought was a Mandarin Christmas carol until our mother, controlling her laughter, informed us that it was our Chinese kindergarten teacher’s rendition of God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen. I sang the second line for him, and later Charles told me that my book had played a significant part in his decision not to go to Japan but to continue his formal education. Because of this, I’ve always claimed credit for preparing the way for his coming to UCLA.

When an able young reporter for the Daily Bruin interviewed me a few days ago, he asked me to state in one sentence just what had made a close friendship possible between Charles and me. I thought for a few moments and then brought out such a confused statement that the reporter, wisely, made no use of it. The simple fact is, as many present today know, I am not a one-sentence man. To give anything like an adequate explanation of Charles and my friendship I need at the very least two sentences: 1. We were both brought up in the severe discipline of the Presbyterian faith, with all its echoes of Calvinism; and though each of us had decided at some point not to run, we knew there was nothing we could do to alter our standing among the elect. 2. We both enjoyed the advantages of having a strong-minded older sister who firmly instructed us in the way we should go, no matter what the consequences.

When it came to his judgment of Holy Writ, Charles was in complete accord with St. Paul when he advised Timothy to “Take a little wine for thy stomach’s sake.” He even went so far as to suggest that the adjective “little” might well be a latter-day interpolation. But he had no sympathy with Paul’s congratulating the Corinthians concerning their response to the claims of false prophets when he wrote, “For ye suffer fools gladly, knowing that ye yourselves are wise.” Charles was enormously learned, but I’m not sure that he was always wise. I am completely sure, however, that Charles never suffered fools gladly.

When Charles began his study of American cover-design artists, particularly the work of Margaret Armstrong, I was going through a difficult period in my own life. After I found that I had a natural talent almost equal to Charles’s for recognizing individual styles in lettering and decorative work, I asked him if I could share this study with him and pretty much forced myself on him as his “Research Assistant” -- a title that I continue to use. This was the beginning of a number of joint projects, some of them still unfinished.

Charles became an important link between the Department and both the University Research and the Clark Libraries. He fought for and saved the English Reading Room for us, helping to expand its range from a largely personal collec-
tion to one that covers the entire department curriculum. For a brief, but golden, period, Charles was instrumental in opening the Clark's diverse collections -- among them its Oscar Wilde holdings and its stunning examples of turn-of-the-century English book design -- for discussion in seminar papers that were subsequently published in a valuable and varied series. This has now been closed, and it is unfortunate that the one remaining set, containing his own paper on two American designers, which will be published out of series, had not quite reached its proof state, some eight years after the seminar itself, at the time of his death. He had contributed to its cost, and I was at least able to tell him that it was in production, news that brought a smile to his face and a firm grip from his hand.

This may be the appropriate occasion to scotch the rumor that the Research Library kept one of its student workers on sentry duty to sound a warning whenever Charles was seen approaching, thus giving the staff time to appear busily engaged in their duties. This canard apparently grew out of a facetious suggestion made in the upper echelons after Charles's reaction to what he thought was unnecessary delay in filling an order of some set of important volumes.

Eventually I came to think of Charles as the younger brother I had embarrassed my parents by asking for when I was three or four years old. I don't think that Charles ever thought of me as his older brother, because that would have given me a slight edge of authority over him -- something Charles would never have accepted. But our relation was a fraternal one, and I like to believe that Charles thought of me as his brotherly peer.

In a published comment on Charles's poetry, Yvor Winters remarked that he felt Charles depended too much on references to and quotations from other writers. Charles had been an admirer of Eliot and Pound before coming under Winters' influence. From time to time he would slip me a rare item he had picked up in those days, giving it to me in a way that made me appear the generous partner in accepting it. Because of this, and because our ongoing joint projects will continue to be published as by "Gullans + Espey," to the dismay of alphabet-loving bibliographers and librarians, I feel free to end these remarks by slightly rewording a dedication from an older brother to his younger brother: Henry Watson Fowler's dedication of Modern English Usage to Francis George Fowler.

To the memory of Charles, who shared with me the planning of our work, but did not live to share its completion, I think of it as it should have been, with its prolixities docked, its dullnesses enlivened, its fads eliminated, its truths multiplied. He had a nimbler wit, and a better sense of proportion, than his seventeen-year older partner; and it is matter of regret that we had not, at a certain point, arranged our undertakings otherwise than we did.
A CHECK LIST OF AMERICAN DECORATED CLOTH BINDINGS, 1892-1915

From the Collection of John A. Lehner

PART 2


5. Bickford, L. H.; Powell, R. S. PHYLLIS IN BOHEMIA. Chicago: Stone, 1897. Unsigned (Frank Hazenplug). ISIB1FSBR1GR,GR1

6. Bouvet, Marguerite. PRINCE TIP-TOP. Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1892. Unsigned (Margaret Armstrong). ISISGR1FIC1

7. Bower, B. M. GOOD INDIAN. Boston: Little, Brown, 1912. Signed BS (Bertha Stuart). ISIGYFICGR,0,Y1


11. D’Annunzio, Gabriele. EPISCOPO & CO. Chicago: Stone, 1896. Signed H1 (Frank Hazenplug). ISIDGR1FBR1GI


43. Peattie, Elia W. A MOUNTAIN WOMAN. Chicago: Way & Williams, 1896. Unsigned (Bruce Rogers). ISIDBIFSBNIS!

44. Perry, Lilla Cabot. IMPRESSIONS. Boston: Copeland & Day, 1898. Signed (illegible). IVRIDGRIFBRLIG,DGR!


46. Potter, Margaret Horton. UNCANNONIZED. Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1901. Signed FWG (Frederick William Gookin). IVRIDGRIFSGIGE,W,LGR!

47. Read, Opie. BOLANYO. Chicago: Way & Williams, 1897. Unsigned (Maxfield Parrish). ISIFBRIBK,Y,W!


WILLIAM JAMES JORDAN

by

Charles Gullans and John Espey

JORDAN, William James, active 1898-1914.

A book cover designer and decorator for McClure, Phillips; designer of bookplates as a member of The Triptych with Jay Chambers and Wilbur Macey Stone from 1898. A member of the literary and artistic salon centered around Mrs. Laura (Skeel) Pomeroy in New York in the first decade of the century. Frances Hackett, American Rainbow, Early Reminiscences (New York: Liveright, [c1971]), "Mrs. Pomeroy," 46 ff. Of her Hackett says, "She had been a sculptor in Rome," and, "She had the vitality to draw the young to her tea table on Sundays and during the week, a band of the tamed and untried, most of them fledglings, who came to sup on the fine arts as well as cookies. She was not afraid to be heterogeneous, though she had been reared in the transcendental America and moved in the classic orbit. In spite of that tightness, she could be receptive, and she created a haven for us." He adds further, "Rome had emboldened her. It dwelt in her as a rich, adventurous presence...." Of a certain kind of older woman who may seem negligible, he says, "...these frumpy dowagers may guard a refined tradition, as distinct from a genteel one, and the relation of the refined to the civilized was Laura Pomeroy’s sole preoccupation, mellowed by her years in Rome."

"Jordan," he says, "was a gray-haired, almost furtive man, who at times would bring a whimsical ditty. He designed colophons for McClure, Phillips, exquisite Aldine anchors, and in his slim mournfulness you had a sense of native defeat from the beginning. A tree on a foreland may not yield, but it is warped by exposure; and you could hear the wind whistling through this parched, tenacious Puritan. His work was good, but McClure's was doomed. Doubleday soon swallowed it with a gulp. Yet at Mrs. Pomeroy's Jordan thawed out."

Warped trees aside, some of Jordan's early design work owes a good deal in ornamental detail to Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Glasgow School, although he commanded a range of decorative effects somewhat distantly descended from Venetian title pages of the 16th century and made very
much his own by the great distinction of his line work. For the first, he sometimes expressed blossoms as squares in order to fit them into his rectangular mold—something often seen in Mackintosh's furniture when he desires the ornament to follow the shape of a chairback or a sideboard's linearity. But when approaching natural detail—leaves, stems, petals—he can as often present a conventionalized appearance of outline, but still vital in the lines in which it is expressed, and always botanically accurate.

His most successful work in ornamentation is for Dr. Johnson's Prayers, below. Here there is a surprising amalgamation of botanical accuracy and conventionalizing arbitrariness. That they combine successfully is the measure of his artistic control, and the pale purple decorations never seem excessive on the cream paper of the book, having been brought into tonal balance with the paper and the ink of the text. The cover has no design, and his work is confined to the title page and the many marginal designs throughout the small book. It is one of the minor masterpieces of layout and book decoration in the first decade of this century.

Design work:

See Weitenkampf, American Graphic Art, under "Triptych." A Few Bookplates and Other Dainty Devices by the Triptych (New York, October 1900), contains four bookplates by Jordan, and with forms of monograms two and four, and four end page decorations. One of the bookplates is for his own library, and has the personal motto, "Percussa Resurgo," "From a blow I rise up again." See also Wilbur Macey Stone, Some Children's Bookplates (Gouverneur, NY: The Brothers of the Book) where a bookplate for "The Pebbles," Stone's children, is reproduced in color.

Design for a brochure cover, ill. Inland Printer, 27 (September, 1901), 867; signed layout and ornament for McClure Phillips, PTLA (1904), p. [1]; six cover designs ill. PW, 64 (August 1, 1903), 224, reading from left to right, nos 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11. All of them are entered in the list below.

Monograms:

Unless otherwise indicated books are signed with monogram three.

1. 2. 3. 4.
Designed Covers:

-----, Tristram of Blent. New York: McClure, Phillips,


Merriman, Henry Seton. Barlasch of the Guards. "Special Edition." New York: McClure, Phillips, 1904. Jordan designed only the spine; the cover design is re-used on many titles, including Booth Tarkington, The Two Van Revels. The cover is ill. in PW, as above.

----- The Last Hope. New York: Scribner, 1904, ill. PW, (September 3, 1904), 391.


Tarkington, Booth. The Beautiful Lady. New York: McClure,
Phillips, 1902. Endpapers, title page, and frontispiece signed by Jordan.


Young, R. E. Sally of Missouri. New York: McClure, Phillips, 1904. Ill. in P W, as above.


LAGERLOF, Selma. The Holy City: Jerusalem II. From the Swedish of .... Translated by Velma Swanston Howard. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page + Co., 1918 [c1918] - Signed - CSUF #4023B (same as #4023 except for lettering)


LANCASTER, G. B. The tracks we tread. New York: Doubleday, Page + Co., 1907. - Signed - Dery


LANGTON, Mary Beach. How to know oriental rugs. New York: Appleton, 1926. [c1904?] - Signed - Lehner + Sawyer (1904)


LA RAME, Louisa de se DE LA RAME, Louisa

LA ROCHE, Mazo de see DE LA ROCHE, Mazo


LEE, Jennette. Uncle William: the man who was shif'less. New York: Century Co. [nd, c1905,1906] - Signed - Benko + Ohio + CSUF #2491A (small 8vo with dust jacket design same as frontispiece by Steele)

LEE, Jennette. Uncle William: the man who was shif'less. New York: Burt [nd, c1905,1906] - Unsigned - CSUF #2491C (8vo with similar, but not exactly same, design as #2491A)


LE GALLIENNE, Richard. Pieces of eight; Being the authentic narrative of a treasure discovered in the Bahama Islands, in the year 1903 -- now first given to the public. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page + Co., 1918 [c1918] - Signed - CSUF #3772A (lit blue cloth)

LE GALLIENNE, Richard. Pieces of eight; Being the authentic narrative of a treasure discovered in the Bahama Islands, in the year 1903 -- now first given to the public. New York: Burt [nd, c1918] - Signed - CSUF #3772 (dark blue cloth - also dust jacket similar to cover and signed)

LE GALLIENNE, Richard. Romances of Old France. New York: Baker + Taylor Co. [nd, c1905] - Signed - UCLA (Frontispiece and decorations by Jay Chambers + Lee Thayer) + Ogle + CSUF #3828 (Frontispiece + B4 black + white oval illustrations with duplication signed DD over green floral page decoration, also signed DD - Cover calf backed boards with paper onlay, almost signed [DD cut off] is enlargement of illustration on page 20.)

LEVETT-YEATS, Sidney Kilner. The Lord Protector. New York: Longmans, Green, 1902. - Unsigned - UCLA (Jay Chambers) + Ogle

LESLEY, Lawrence J. In camp on the Big Sunflower. New York: New York Book Co. [nd, c1913] - Signed - CSUF #2493 (paper onlay)

LESLEY, Lawrence J. Lost in the Great Dismal Swamp. New York: New York Book Co. [nd, c1913] - Signed - CSUF #2494 (color paper onlay design similar to black + white frontispiece - The Camp Fire + Trail Series)


LINDSAY, Anna Robertson Brown. The warriors. New York: Crowell, 1903 [c1903] - Signed - UCLA (Lee Thayer) + PAQ + Lehner + Ogle + Herman + CSUF #2496


[c1906] - Unsigned - Ogle


LOUNSBERRY, Lionel. *Rob Ranger, the young ranchman; or, Going it alone at Lost River.* Philadelphia: McKay [nd, c1903] - ? - Munzer


