

DOUGLAS FOSKETT'S UZANNE COLLECTION

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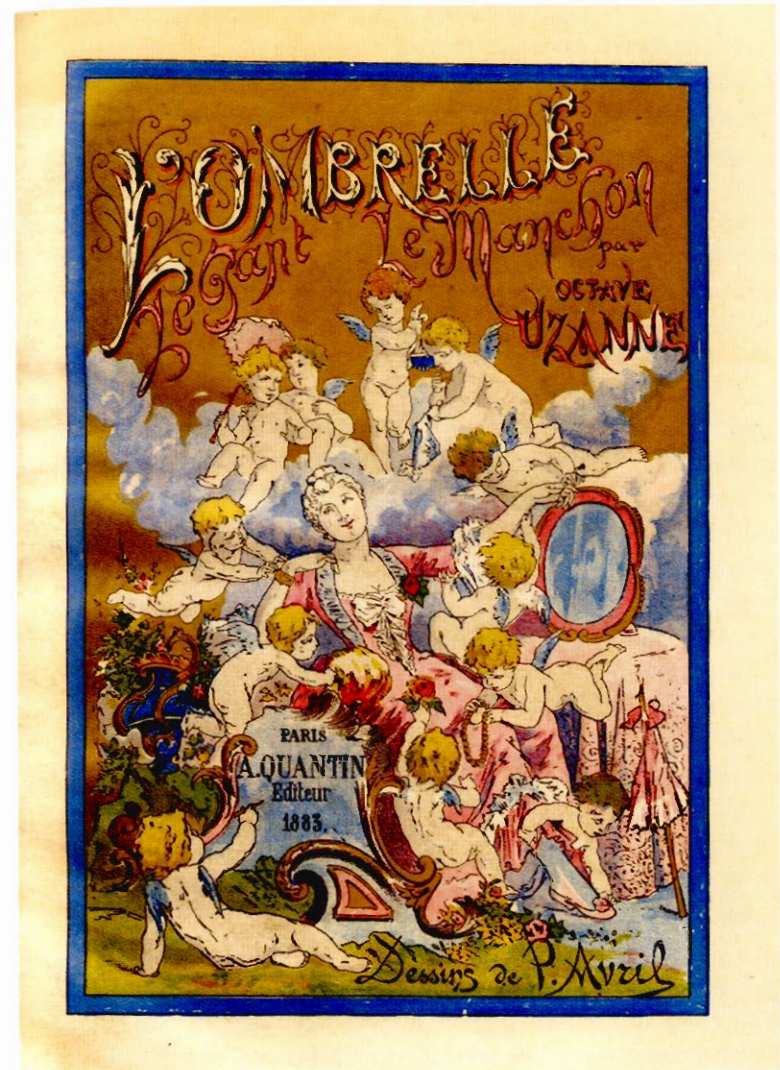
FOR PRESIDENTS OF THE PRIVATE LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION to amass their own private libraries is hardly surprising. Some are particularly large and striking, such as Reinhold Regensburger's, described by Philip Ward in 1957 on pp. 6–9 of *PLA Quarterly*, 1, classified by a scheme of Regensburger's devising and open to all visitors. In the case of his immediate Presidential successor, librarian Douglas John Foskett (1918–2004), collecting books is probably not a salient feature in people's memories. Foskett began the list of his recreations in his *Who's Who* entry with 'books' (preceding travel, writing and cricket), leaving 'collecting' as the activity connected with the books to be inferred. The paragraph does not list Foskett's Presidency of the Private Libraries Association, 1960–63, among his many posts. Neither does his brief and focussed obituary on p. 11 of the CILIP journal *Catalogue & Index*, no. 152 (2004), nor his longer, more general and wide-ranging obituary in *The Times* (9 June 2004), nor either of the two still longer obituaries accorded to him in the July/August and September 2004 issues of volume 3 of CILIP's *Update* (p. 61 and p. 45 respectively). Even Michael Humby's introduction to the festschrift he edited for Foskett in 1993, *Libraries and Information Services: Studies in Honour of Douglas Foskett* (pp. 1–3) and K. C. Harrison's longer chapter in the same work, 'Douglas Foskett: a Personal Memoir' (pp. 5–9) are silent on the matter of a predilection for books. Only V. T. H. Parry's obituary in *SCONUL Focus*, 32 (2004), pp. 65–6, suggests otherwise: 'Most librarians of his age were bookmen, who loved the touch, the appearance and the smell of books, and who often formed their own collections. Douglas fitted that description; we were all proud to be called "Librarians".' (p. 65).

The general omission is perhaps unremarkable, in view of Foskett's outstanding achievements in other areas: as President of the Library Association; co-founder and Chairman of the Classifica-

tion Research Group; consultant to UNESCO, UNISIST and the British Council; guest lecturer in countries as diverse as Brazil, China, Ghana and Iceland; and author of over 360 articles, reviews and books. Five of those articles are in *The Private Library*, appearing in a series between vol. 2, no. 5 (1959) and vol. 3, no. 8 (1961). Unlike most articles in *The Private Library*, describing either the experiences, vicissitudes and euphoria of acquisition, the resulting libraries or types of books, Foskett entitled his pieces 'Classification for Private Libraries, I-V', stating his purpose as: 'to describe some of the schemes available, and then to discuss the method of "facet analysis", first systematically described by Ranganathan' ('Classification for Private Libraries, I', *The Private Library*, 2:5, 1959, 76-7 (p. 76)) and carrying it out accordingly. These brief articles apply Foskett's interest in classification to the purposes of private collectors.

Yet although neither he nor anybody else said much about it, Foskett, who was widely read, had his own quite considerable private library. He began to collect books as part of his studies at Queen Mary College (1936-9), where he read English literature as his major and French as his subsidiary. His brother, A. C. Foskett, also renowned in the library world, recalls having spent considerable time at home while he had tuberculosis during the War and finding the availability of Douglas's collection a help. At that time A. C. Foskett developed a knowledge of English literature and a love for the works of Jane Austen. Douglas had several histories of English literature, which his brother read with great interest. Another text specifically recalled from this early period is the complete works of Dryden, used to verify a critic's condemnation of two poems by Dryden as obscene.

Douglas continued to collect, with he and his brother working together to put up shelves in his study to take his collection after Douglas and his wife, Joy, moved into their new house at Gerrards Cross in 1952. At one stage Douglas mentioned having about 5,000 books. In late 1996 the Fosketts moved house again, to a flat in Southsea. The move necessitated weeding Douglas's personal library heavily. By then he had retired from his final post as Director of Central Library Services and Goldsmiths' Librarian of the University of London (1978-83), and at this stage his working collection of books



Cover: *L'Ombrelle, le gant, le manchon*, 1883 (reduced)

on librarianship, about 285 volumes featuring most noticeably works on classification, but also information retrieval, computerisation in libraries, general librarianship and his issues of *The Private Library*, came to what is now the Senate House Library, University of London. Both at Gerrards Cross and in Southsea, Foskett's books reflected his personal and wide-ranging interests. Most were amassed for the use of an educated man rather than being the books of a conscious collector. In addition to the professional interest of the books on librarianship mentioned above, Foskett had a large number of French books, resulting from an early and ongoing love of them and of France, especially Paris, visited frequently in connection with Foskett's work with UNESCO. The collection further included cricket (another of Foskett's passions, which, unlike books, did make it to Foskett's festschrift and more than one obituary. Foskett was involved in the computerisation and classification of the MCC library, and advised on what it should buy.) There was literature, philosophy, history of all sorts, and quite a collection of writings by T. H. Huxley, the subject of Foskett's M.A. at Birkbeck College. There were books by such people as Richard Dawkins, and a large set of Folio Society books. Most of the books were classified by the Bliss Bibliographic Classification scheme, of which Foskett had written: 'This is a scheme that might well commend itself to a collector wanting a scholarly system without too much need for minutely detailed specification' ('Classification for Private Libraries, III', *The Private Library*, 3:3, 1960, 26-8 (p. 27)); Foskett and his wife Joy helped to develop the second edition of Bliss, still evolving. Many of the books have now gone to Portsmouth City Libraries, to charities, and to University College London.

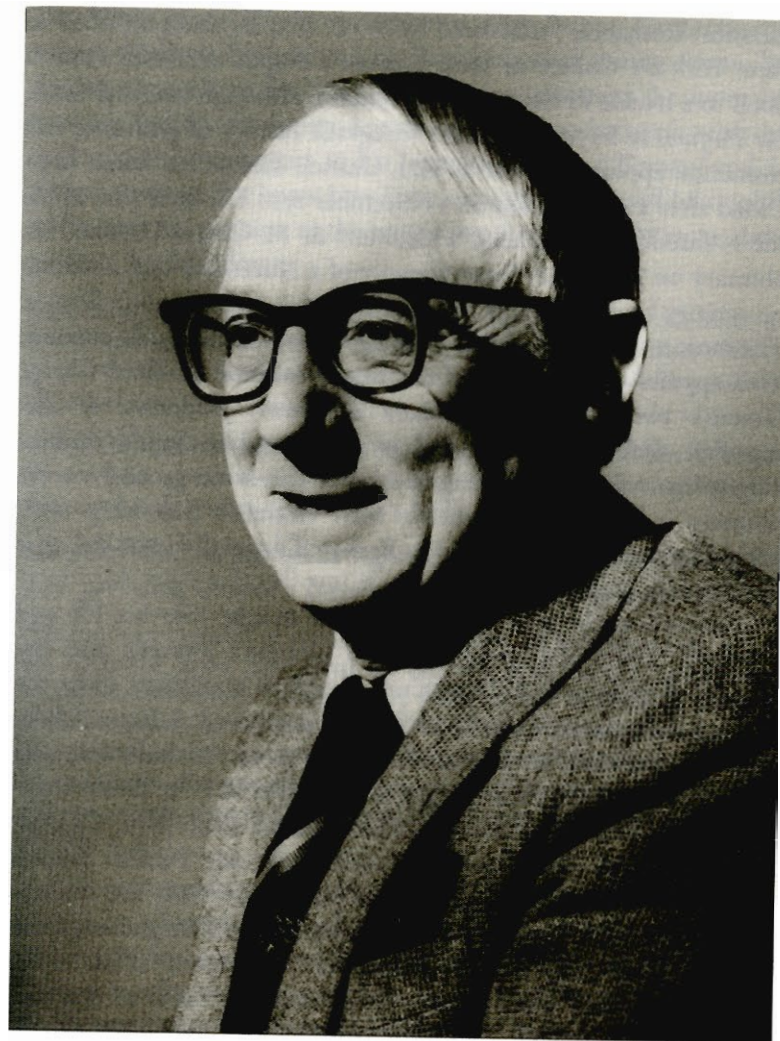
Among all these books, there was one deliberate collection. This was of works by the little-known French writer and bibliophile Louis-Octave Uzanne, commonly known as Octave Uzanne (1852-1931). Foskett was proud of the collection. He kept it apart from his other books, not classified by Bliss, and had several volumes bound by the University of London Library binder in blue half morocco and marbled boards. On the spines were five raised bands, gold fillets, a gold flower, and author, title and date tooled in gold. The



Cover: *La Française du siècle*, 1886 (reduced)

collection came to Senate House Library in 2004, shortly after Foskett's death from cancer on 7 May, and forms the basis of the remainder of this article.

Octave Uzanne was born on 14 September 1852 in Auxerre, where he studied Classics before moving to Paris and engaging in bibliography. His output began with editions of lesser-known seventeenth-century French poetry (for example, Benserade; François Sarazin), four volumes published between 1875 and 1878 in the series 'Les poètes de ruelles au XVIIe siècle'. He progressed to editions of narratives by minor eighteenth-century French writers, such as Claude-Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon ('Crébillon fils'), Anne Claude Philippe Caylus and Restif de La Bretonne, chiefly within the series 'Les petits conteurs du XVIIIe siècle' but also in 'Documents sur les moeurs du XVIIIe siècle'. These works, published between 1878 and 1883, are more numerous (16 volumes), so that it is the eighteenth century with which Uzanne is more commonly associated. From editing the work of others, Uzanne moved into two distinct spheres, as an historian of female fashion – for example, with *L'Eventail* (1882) and *L'Ombrelle, le gant, le manchon* (1883) – and a student of bibliography (which in a few short stories he blended with science fiction). Uzanne founded several short-running bibliographical journals, such as *L'Art et l'idée* and *Le Livre moderne*, and contributed to various papers, including *Le Figaro*, *L'Echo de Paris* and *Le Studio* among others. In 1889 he founded the Société des Bibliophiles Contemporaines, and in 1895, when this earlier society folded up, the Société des Bibliophiles Indépendants. Uzanne took an interest in book design, internal and external, whereby he believed in striking and attractive book covers resembling chocolate boxes – and, incidentally, in the superiority of French design over that of other countries. He designed books for the Paris firm Quantin, which published several of his works. His *Reliure moderne artistique et fantaisiste* (1887) and articles in *L'Art et l'idée* demonstrate awareness of and fascination with contemporary design and bindings, imagination and innovation. Subsequently Uzanne illustrated nineteenth-century books by leading authors, such as Alphonse Daudet's *Nabob* and George Sand's *Mauprat*, in the twenty-volume series 'The French



Douglas Foskett

Classical Romances', translated by W. L. Blydes and published in New York by Collier in 1902. Uzanne's output decreased from a flood to a trickle in the twentieth century, although his final work, *Les Parfums et les fards à travers les âges* (a history of perfumes and cosmetics) appeared as late as 1927. Uzanne died at his home in St Cloud after a short illness on 1 November 1931. The later part of his life is shrouded in mystery, with 'Mort de M. Octave Uzanne', his obituary on p. 4 of *Le Temps financier* of 2 November 1931, covering no activity or achievement between the 1890s and Uzanne's demise. The most recent biographical piece about Uzanne is equally reticent. This appears on pp. 467–8 in the second volume (L–Z) of George Grente's two-volume *Dictionnaire des lettres françaises: le dix-neuvième siècle* (Paris, 1972) and is reproduced in Saur's *Archives Biographiques Français*. It largely covers the same ground as the obituary, adding, in connection with Uzanne's friendship with and influence by the older writer Barbey d'Aureville (1808–89), that Uzanne was tinged with dandyism.

Uzanne's works provide some further insight into his life and character. From the contributors to Uzanne's journals and the authors of prefaces to his books, one can glean something about the literary and artistic circles in which Uzanne moved. A list of 'fellow writers and friends' at the end of *The Fan* (p. 142) includes Edmond Goncourt (1822–96), Paul Lacroix (also known as P. L. Jacob, 1806–84), Arsène Houssaye (1815–96), Jules Claretie (1840–1913), Champfleury (1821–99) and Charles Monselet (1825–88). Further friends included the publisher Edouard Rouveyre (1849–1930), the illustrator and engraver Albert Robida (1848–1926) and the Belgian engraver Felicien Rops (1833–98). In *Instantanés d'Angleterre* (Paris, 1914) Uzanne lists men with whom he consorted on visits to England between 1880 and 1900. They were as highly cultured as his French companions, with the list featuring William Morris (Uzanne makes special reference to the Kelmscott Press), James Whistler, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Sir Henry Irving and Oscar Wilde, whom Uzanne describes as 'un vrai dandy' (*Instantanés d'Angleterre*, p. 12).

Uzanne had a reputation for erudition. He had a broad education, as evinced by the wide-ranging allusions found in his works:

The Mirror of the World, for instance, cites Balzac, Kant, classical writers, Mme de Sévigné and La Rochefoucauld among others. Yet despite a penchant for long, meandering sentences he wore his learning lightly, favouring a style of leisurely discourse with his readers, as he emphasises in his introductions to *L'Eventail* and *La Reliure moderne*. We know how Uzanne regarded himself bibliophilically from his reaction to the suggestion that he should write about modern bookbindings:

Comment! un ouvrage sur la Reliure signé par moi, simple dilettante du bouquin, amoureux du livre et des livres jusqu'à la moelle, flâneur bibliographe et curieux littéraire plutôt que bibliophile . . . (*La Reliure moderne*, pp. 1–2.)

[What! A work on bookbindings signed by me, simple dabbler in books, lover to the core of the book and books, idle bibliographer and student interested in literature rather than a bibliophile . . .]

Sebastian Sanchez provides a vignette of him in his 'Small talk in the van', prefacing Uzanne's *Frenchwoman of the Century* (London, 1886):

The uniform epithets of erudite, bibliophilist, or bibliographer, which are conferred upon him from all quarters with justice, irritate him sometimes excessively. Inconstant by temperament as unstable, haughty even to madness, he makes a show of repudiating his past work, his loves of resurrection, his researches of literary history, his gallantries, reported, and, above all, those gracious books in which he has joined better than any one artistic taste to delicacies of form and style. (*Frenchwoman of the Century*, p. xv.)

Although productive, Uzanne clearly was not particularly disciplined: he allowed *The Book Hunter in Paris*, planned towards the end of 1886 and announced for April 1887, to lie fallow for six years because, as admitted in the preface, he lost enthusiasm for it, and he threw over *L'Art et L'idée* at the end of 1892 because, again as freely confessed by himself in the final issue, he found the rigour of continuous deadlines arduous. A colourful picture of Uzanne appears in Antoine Laporte's *Les Bouquinistes et les quais de Paris tels qu'ils sont* (Paris, 1893). Uzanne had published his *Bouquinistes et bouquiniers: physiologie des quais de Paris du Pont Royal au Pont Sully* in the same year, describing the character of the various stalls along the

Left Bank where Uzanne wandered, fraternised with booksellers, and purchased books. His descriptions of the particular stalls and their keepers include an unflattering portrayal of Laporte, and *Les Bouquinistes et les quais de Paris* is Laporte's vitriolic riposte. It accuses Uzanne of being a conceited puppy and a harlequin, and of having ungratefully betrayed the bookseller who taught him everything that he knew.

Uzanne wrote and edited prolifically. Six large pages of America's *National Union Catalogue* of pre-1956 imprints are devoted to Uzanne (124 entries, including cross-references); three pages (94 entries, including cross-references) of the printed British Library catalogue (plus entries in the supplements, and including some titles not in the NUC). In his heyday Uzanne was known in both Great Britain and the United States. Several of his books were translated into English, in both English and American editions: Foskett's collection includes English editions of *The Book-Hunter in Paris* (1883), *The Fan* (1884), *The Frenchwoman of the Century: Fashions, Manners, Usages* (1886), *The Mirror of the World* (1889) and *The Modern Parisienne* (1912) in addition to the French originals of all but *The Fan*. Reviews appeared in English-speaking publications, ranging from *The Times* as the most widely-read publication to *Notes and Queries*, the most academic, to *Academy* and *Dial* among others; in America they could be found in *Lippincott's Magazine* and *The New York Times*. Outside the French and English-speaking worlds he gained less fame. *La Femme à Paris* was translated into German as *Die Pariserin* (Dresden, [1929]) and *Les Parfums et les fards à travers les âges* as *Parfum und Schminke im Wandel der Zeiten* (Geneva, 1930); three short stories were translated into Czech and published separately between 1927 and 1939; and two into Swedish (1947 and 1956). Uzanne is represented in all the national libraries of Europe, but less well than in Great Britain and the United States: a sweep of the Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog revealed between two (Poland) and 54 (Switzerland) copies in European national libraries. There is not a particular leaning towards countries with Romance languages, as 46 items are recorded in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in the Hague, as opposed to eight items in the Spanish national library.

Today, Uzanne has not been entirely forgotten. There are occasional reprints: the Foskett collection includes a Slatkine reprint of Sade's *Idée sur les romans*, edited by Uzanne (Geneva, 1967). Beyond discussion of him in the context of French book design, for example in Rolf Söderberg, *French Book Illustration 1880–1905* (Stockholm, 1977), chance references occur. One of Foskett's books included a clipping of a letter to a newspaper quoting Uzanne, read in the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum. *Introduction to Bibliography: Seminar Syllabus* by Thomas Tanselle (Charlottesville, Va, 2002), a bibliography of works to be read by students of historical bibliography, includes Uzanne's *La Reliure moderne. Lasting Impressions: The Grolier Club Library*: a catalogue of an exhibition at the Grolier Club in New York (New York, 2004) includes as one of the thirty items in the section 'Illustration: Processes / Examples' Uzanne's journal *Le Livre moderne*. A cross-reference in a recent antiquarian and second-hand bookseller's catalogue from Uzanne's name to a couple of titles to which he contributed the introduction suggests that his works have come to be regarded as collectable and that Foskett was ahead of his time in collecting them.

Many of Uzanne's books are now available via second-hand dealers: a recent search turned up 129 hits on Bookfinder (approximately 23 titles in 26 editions) and an astounding 440 hits on Abebooks, in 84 titles. (In both calculations, I have counted translations as separate titles.) Prices ranged from £1.11 for *Nabob*, illustrated by Uzanne, to £2,356.79 for *Le Livre*, one of the journals he edited. As an example of current availability and prices on Abebooks of certain books in the Foskett collection, *Caprices d'un bibliophile* (2 copies) cost between £83.75 and £137.37; *The Fan* (19 copies) between £27.75 and £277.50; and *Les Zigzags d'un curieux* (2 copies) between £179.89 and £447.79. Not all the books in the Foskett collection were available via Abebooks and Bookfinder at the time of searching, e.g. *Bouquinistes et bouquineurs*.

Foskett stumbled across the works of Uzanne on one of his trips to Paris in the 1970s. Both he and his wife were gripped by Uzanne's writing, his wife also admiring the illustrations, and he decided to collect Uzanne, as a writer of a limited number of books which it

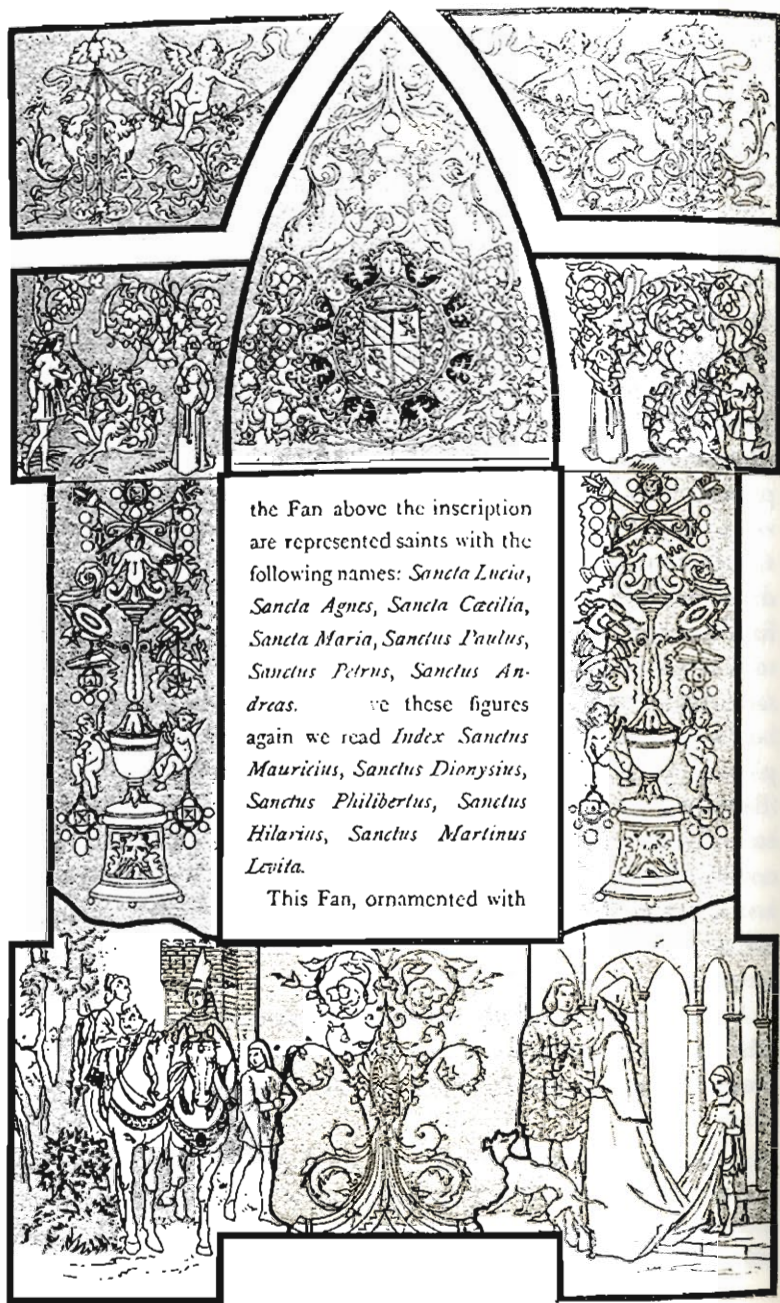
would be possible to buy on a librarian's salary. French *fin de siècle* literature appealed. One of Foskett's successors as University Librarian recalled his further mention of slightly naughty overtones; a feature applicable to Uzanne's edited works rather than his original ones, but recognised in a Parke-Bernet auction catalogue held in the collection, *An Extensive Collection of Libertine Literature: Property of a European Princely House and Other Owners* (New York, 1971), and in Louis Perceau's two-volume *Bibliographie du roman érotique au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1930), also bequeathed. Expansion of the collection followed. Further visits to Paris resulted in more acquisitions. Roger Steele, Sub-Librarian for Acquisitions at the then University of London Library, drew Foskett's attention to items in booksellers' catalogues; a looseleaf extract in *La Femme à Paris* (1894) of a sale catalogue from the Antiquariat Inge Utzt in Stuttgart has a note on the front: 'See 761-2. Roger'. Foskett also made an appeal for books via the Private Libraries Association. Postcards and letters filed in the books show subsequent offers of books from booksellers in London and on the Continent. Fisher & Sperr in Highgate offered several books, acting as intermediaries ('The items are offered subject to remaining unsold – they are not of course in my own stock', reads a postcard of 30 June 1990, pertaining to *Le Calendrier de Venus* and *Les Surprises du coeur* for £80 each and *Du Mariage, par un philosophe du 18e siècle* for £85). Other books came from Jean-Jacques Faure in Geneva (postcards dated 1981 and 1982), and an offer of *Caprices d'un bibliophile*, not accepted, was made from David Mason in Toronto. Prices emphasise Foskett's budgetary limitations and sense of perspective: he bought *La Française du siècle* from Faure for 350 francs, but rejected Faure's offer of *L'Eventail* (which to the end of his life Foskett did not acquire in French) and *L'Ombrelle, le gant, le manchon* for a combined price of 1,200 francs; on the letter offering them to him, Foskett circled the price and put an exclamation mark in the margin beside it.

While Foskett would have liked to have achieved a complete Uzanne collection, he was aware that it remained representative rather than comprehensive. Each element of Uzanne's interests is present. The bibliographical periodicals are represented with the

title *Le Livre moderne* (Paris, 1890), bound in Foskett's bespoke binding. Several monographs of bibliographical interest or concerning French women and/or fashion from Foskett's collection have already been mentioned; others include *Les Modes de Paris* (Paris, 1898), *Le Sottisier des moeurs* (Paris, 1911) and *Son Altesse la femme* (Paris, 1885). Love constitutes another theme, for example in *Le Bric-à-brac de l'amour* (Paris, 1879) and *Le Célibat et l'amour: traité de vie passionnelle et de dilection féminine* (Paris, 1912). The edited works include Iwan Bloch's *Le Marquis de Sade et son temps*, prefaced by Uzanne (Berlin, 1901); Guillaume Imbert de Bourdeaux's *La Chronique scandaleuse* (Paris, 1879), and Mairobert's *Anecdotes sur la comtesse du Barry* (Paris, 1880). That Foskett may have sought consciously to have an example of each type of Uzanne's written work is apparent from the presence of a photocopy of a type of work barely represented otherwise, Uzanne's short stories. The photocopy is of one of the tales in *Contes pour les Bibliophiles* (1895), 'Le bibliothécaire van der Boëcken de Rotterdam'. In this story, which bears the hallmarks of wish fulfilment, a librarian with mesmeric eyes accompanies the narrator to the zoo and mesmerises the animals, sending them to sleep; this same librarian also mesmerises booksellers, in order to obtain the books he wants at the prices that he wants. The story is not the only piece of fiction by Uzanne in the collection. *Les Surprises du coeur* (Paris, 1881) experiments with different forms of fiction – a novelle of letters between a man and two women with whom he is entangled; one straight short story; extracts from a woman's diary – and *Le Calendrier de Venus* (Paris, 1880) contains in addition to essays about women a short story in epistolary form, 'Ephémérides des sens'.

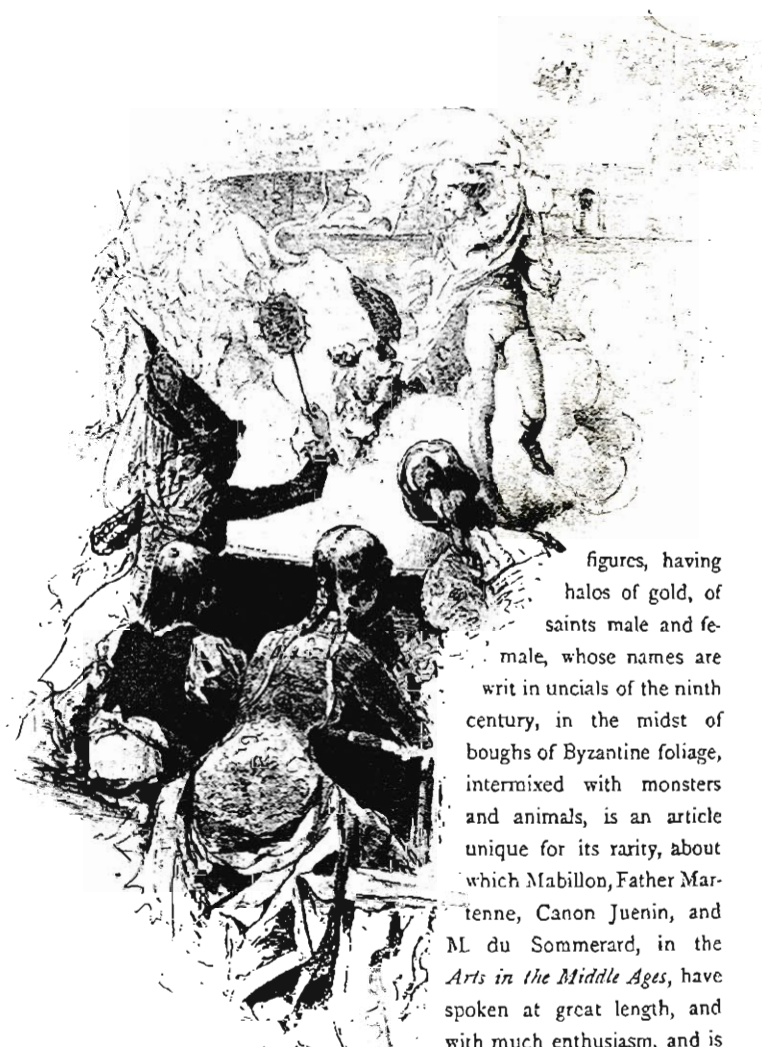
Uzanne's concern with book design is evident from such works as *The Fan*, in the preface of which Uzanne wrote, in his typical complex and compound style, of the close relationship between text and illustration:

This Fan, then, of which the text runs or winds across the coloured prints of the volume, is not by any means a work of mighty wisdom and erudition, such as to set good-sized spectacles on the noses of the *magisters* and eminent savants of Christendom – men whom I hold in the



the Fan above the inscription are represented saints with the following names: *Sancta Lucia, Sancta Agnes, Sancta Cæcilia, Sancta Maria, Sanctus Paulus, Sanctus Petrus, Sanctus Andreas.* Above these figures again we read *Index Sanctus Mauricius, Sanctus Dionysius, Sanctus Philibertus, Sanctus Hilarius, Sanctus Martinus Levita.*

This Fan, ornamented with



figures, having halos of gold, of saints male and female, whose names are writ in uncials of the ninth century, in the midst of boughs of Byzantine foliage, intermixed with monsters and animals, is an article unique for its rarity, about which Mabillon, Father Martenne, Canon Juenin, and M. du Sommerard, in the *Arts in the Middle Ages*, have spoken at great length, and with much enthusiasm, and is

likely to remain as celebrated as the famous Fan of the Queen Theodelinde (sixth century), preserved in the treasury of the king, Monza, of which M. Barbier de Montaud, a Dominican priest, has given a description.

One interesting form of the Fan is that which we meet with in Spain about 1430. It is a sort of round *abanico*, made of rice paper, or garnished with feathers. We may imagine that, fortified

profoundest respect and esteem, but would never pardon myself for having disturbed them for a banquet so little abundant as mine in wondrous archaeological discoveries (pp. 2–3).

Later in the preface Uzanne refers to the book's 'originality of illustration, of which I fear not to claim the conception' (p. 7) and in his appendix he again refers to the interaction of text and illustration:

Add to this, for those who know the art and labours of book-making, the obligation the author was under . . . to confine his spirit within the pretty adornments of the margin, the compression of every fantasy of style in an inexorable frame of sketches, places on copper, and therefore immovable – the necessity . . . of . . . so taking his spring as to traverse in suitable connection with his text the spirit of the engravings, sown in the track of this book, like a female circus-rider who breaks with apparent ease through her paper hoops (pp. 132–3).

Most of Paul Avril's illustrations in this work are in delicate monochrome and recall the eighteenth century. Even these are unusual, for the colour base varies widely: some illustrations are red, others blue, mauve, pink, brown or different shades of green. When Uzanne discusses Greek fans, the picture resembles the style of an Etruscan vase; for Japanese, Egyptian, Roman and medieval fans, the style of illustrations varies accordingly. The text is enclosed in various borders and tail-pieces, the latter ranging from foliage to a lizard to architectural designs. The technique used in *The Sunshade*, *The Glove*, *The Muff*, also illustrated by Paul Avril, is similar. In *Le Miroir du monde* (Paris, 1888), every single page contains an illustration, even if this is merely a tail-piece or a decorative half-border, and the text fits around the illustration. Uzanne's desire for striking and attractive book covers can be seen via Foskett's collection. *La Française du siècle*, for example, is encased in a cardboard wrapper with a broad purple ribbon threaded through it, sporting the title and the name of the author in gold. Within that is a thinner cream-coloured cardboard wrapper. A large panel shows the title, author and imprint in blue and black on a pale blue background. Three bonneted women's heads are shown in medallions linked by flowers. Colours include flesh, pinks, grey, blues, greens, browns and gold.

Immersion in the Second Empire and preoccupation with feminine fashion may suggest frivolity. Strolling among bookstalls along

the Seine, if not indicative of frivolity, implies leisure. *La Femme à Paris* (Paris, 1894), present in the collection both in French and in its English translation, *The Modern Parisienne* (London, 1912), acts as a corrective to this impression. Here Uzanne's preoccupation with society is from the perspective of social justice, as a reformer. In his chapter 'The kingdom of fashion', Uzanne draws attention to a seamier side of fashion than appears in, for example, *L'Ombrelle, le gant, le manchon*:

No one seems to think of the seamy side of the great businesses in the kingdom of fashion. The fine ladies who dress, chatter, and undress, thinking very little more of social questions than do the birds in some gilt cage, would be horrified if, in adorning themselves for a dinner or ball, their silk skirts and creamy underwear could reveal what patience and nights of toil and misery have gone to their production. . . . there are thousands of girls who, after a day of twelve or more hours of toil, are paid 4 francs or 4.50 at the most. Many of them only earn 3.50. There is also the dead season to reckon with, when nothing at all is earned, and they are reduced to absolute want. Moreover, all this refers to exceedingly skilled workers, apprenticed from their childhood. The inexperienced ones, the unhappy needlewomen who toil in their own wretched homes, or are scattered through the large workrooms, can scarcely earn 1.75 or 2 francs. *Two francs* for having stitched from dawn to dusk! (p. 42).

Uzanne further describes the plight of shop assistants, who perform 'ten hours' hard work in a heavy and vitiated atmosphere, remaining on their feet all the time. They are usually pale and anaemic . . .' (p. 109) and to the 'hells of pain and despair called hospitals' (p. 120), in which wardmaids and probationers are unconscientious and indifferent to patients' welfare, so that: 'if they [the probationers] dislike a patient they manage to forget the hour for his medicine, and it is a lucky chance if they do not make mistakes and poison some poor creature committed to their care' (p. 119). He also criticises charitable organisations for squandering money in maintaining large numbers of functionaries: 'How much better, could the relief reach its object without any loss on the way . . .' (p. 218).

The Foskett Uzanne collection in fact includes more works of which Uzanne is not the author or editor than it does works of which he is. The remainder are largely works of French literature,

several in the series 'Coffret d'un bibliophile'. The editions are modest. Yet several are illustrated, for example by Paul-Emile Bécot, with characters in eighteenth-century costume. Several of these texts and others are by the secondary eighteenth-century authors in whom Uzanne immersed himself – for example, Anne Claude Philippe Caylus, Claude-Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, Andréa de Nerciat, L'abbé de Voisenon – and form a fitting complement to the core of the collection as well as an imaginative way of augmenting its spirit. Montesquieu's *Temple of Gnidus* (London, [1889]), with an introduction by Uzanne, and the Marquis de Sade's *Idée sur les romans*, edited by Uzanne, constitute exceptions to the comparative obscurity of the writers.

Octave Uzanne was a fitting subject for a collection made by Douglas Foskett. The two men shared the fact of having a diverse range of interests. They also had in common a forward-looking approach, demonstrated in Uzanne's case by his prediction in the short story 'La fin des livres' of the death of books, to be replaced by phonographs, and in Foskett's by his early appreciation of the role of computerisation in librarianship. The choice of an unusual, intriguing and enigmatic subject may also be considered demonstrative of a forward-looking approach. Foskett was a modest collector; but in his one consciously formed 'collection', he had reason for satisfaction.

I am indebted to Mrs Joy Foskett and to A. C. Foskett for their generous assistance in providing recollections of Douglas Foskett and his collecting activities for this article, and also to Emma Robinson and Steve Clews of the Senate House Library, University of London. I am indebted to Christine Wise of Senate House Library for drawing V. T. H. Parry's obituary of Douglas Foskett to my attention.