

Jennie's Gift:

The Genesis of Daniel Willard Fiske's Petrarch Collection

The City and the Book V

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In a letter from Paris dated 20 July 1881, Daniel Willard Fiske, first university librarian of Cornell University, described with evident animation his nascent Petrarch collection:

My Petrarch collection, of which nothing is to be said in Ithaca, grows apace. In it I have some very lovely specimens of the French binder's art. On the anniversary of our marriage my wife gave me a folio French translation of one of Petrarch's works the binding of which is as lovely as possible....¹

The Fiske Petrarch Collection represents one of the remarkable episodes of book-collecting in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. By 1890, Willard Fiske had purchased about three thousand volumes relating to Petrarch, including several costly manuscripts.² As the introduction of the 1916 catalogue compiled by Mary Fowler shows, Fiske was unusually persistent in acquiring as complete a collection as possible of the early editions of Petrarch, relying chiefly on his contacts via post among booksellers throughout Europe.³

Nonetheless, the origins of this Petrarch collection, still considered uniquely comprehensive for the first four centuries of printing, are not entirely clear. Fiske began collecting in earnest during the anxious last months of Jennie McGraw Fiske's life; his wife had been in inexorable decline for most of her adult life. Whereas Willard Fiske was to write some years later that "the charm of the chase" impelled his relentless effort to create his superb Dante collection in the 1890s, he relates no such moment of impulsion regarding Petrarch in the correspondence of the time.⁴ The new collection is increasing

¹ Daniel Willard Fiske (hereafter DWF) to George W. Harris, 20 July 1881, from Paris. Daniel Willard Fiske papers, #13-1-348. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

² Mary Fowler, *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection Bequeathed by Willard Fiske* (Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1916), xv. The number is now over five thousand. Purchases have become increasingly selective in the century after Fiske's death, but significant editions—fine-press productions, important facsimile volumes, research monographs by Cornell professors and the like—continue to find a home in the collection.

³ *Ibid.*, xv ff.

⁴ Theodore Wesley Koch, *Catalogue of the Dante Collection Presented by Willard Fiske* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Library, 1898-1900), iv. Fiske collected Dante only sporadically before February 1893: "But my ambition shortly took a broader range; the charm of the chase got possession of me, and it was impossible to escape from its grasp. For the book-collector ... is the slave of his passion."

“apace,” Fiske informs George Harris with satisfaction, without any reference to a generative idea.⁵ Emblematic of this mist of mystery is the identity of the “folio French translation” with the exquisite binding, for neither Fiske nor any other writer explicitly cites Jennie’s gift by title. Before this discussion proposes the identity of Jennie’s gift to Willard Fiske, it may be well to narrate the events that ensured the foundation and eventual donation of the Fiske Petrarch Collection.

Willard and Jennie



Daniel Willard Fiske in 1880

Willard Fiske and Jennie McGraw are among the more prominent figures associated with the founding of Cornell University. There is considerable documentation of their lives and careers; their biographies, Willard’s written by his literary executor, Horatio S. White, in 1925, and Jennie’s by Ronald John Williams in 1949, make extensive use of these papers.⁶

Portrayals of Fiske, who was born 11 November 1831 near Syracuse, New York, suggest a precocious intellect matched with passion for whatever was of interest to him. A

⁵ In the introduction to Fowler, *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection*, George W. Harris quotes the French Petrarch scholar Henri Cochin as saying (26 June 1915), “M. Willard Fiske avait commencé sa collection pétrarquiesque sans y penser.”

⁶ Horatio S. White, *Willard Fiske, Life and Correspondence: A Biographical Study* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1925); Ronald John Williams, *Jennie McGraw Fiske: Her Influence Upon Cornell University* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1949).

“lamentably erratic youth,”⁷ he left Hamilton College at the end of 1848 before completing a second year. By the summer of 1850 he was in Copenhagen. Fascinated by Nordic Europe and its languages, Fiske achieved fluency in Danish and then Swedish,⁸ the latter while he was attending lectures at the University of Uppsala. In Sweden he purchased the first titles for his Icelandic collection, which eventually became the largest in its field in North America.⁹

Fiske was never prosperous during the two decades before his appointment as first university librarian of Cornell University, at the close of 1868. Nonetheless he was perpetually busy (whether in America or Europe) and inevitably gregarious, with a host of friends and contacts, and with occupations and interests that included journalism, chess and libraries. For several years in the 1850s he was an assistant librarian in the private Astor Library in New York City. After a decade of various employments, he took up his post at Cornell. He first met Jennie a few years later.

⁷ A self-description in “Swedish Student Life,” in *Memorials of Willard Fiske*. 3, *The Lecturer* (Boston: Badger, c1922), 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 4-5 for Fiske’s fascination with the North and the “irrepressible assiduity” with which he says he applied himself to learning Scandinavian languages. Fiske states his sojourn in Copenhagen “was occupied with lessons in Icelandic, and [his] associates were chiefly the score or more of students from distant Iceland,” but he does not here mention the name of his instructor, Gísli Brynjúlfsson (see Halldór Hermannsson, “Willard Fiske and Icelandic Bibliography,” in *Willard Fiske Memorial. The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 12, nos. 3-4 (July-October 1918): p. 98).

⁹ For Halldór Hermannsson’s description of the origins and early renown of the Fiske Icelandic Collection, see the preface of the *Catalogue of the Icelandic Collection Bequeathed by Willard Fiske* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Library, 1914).



Jennie McGraw, ca. 1879

Jennie McGraw, the only child of a wealthy lumber baron, was born near Ithaca on 14 September 1840. Her mother died of tuberculosis when Jennie was a child, and the bereft daughter was of delicate constitution.¹⁰ By standards then prevailing for young women of class, her excellent mind received a fine, cultured education. Jennie and her father John McGraw were both generous donors to and prime movers of Cornell University in its first years. Jennie gave to the university at its inauguration a set of nine bells,¹¹ and the bells in McGraw Tower, Cornell's iconic campanile, ring the hours and offer recitals to this day.

After the death of John McGraw, Jennie went to Europe on an extended tour in April 1878. Fiske, on leave from Cornell in part for health reasons¹² but still active in directing the library through correspondence with George Harris, the assistant university librarian, was in Iceland during summer and autumn 1879, and then went to Rome in the spring of 1880 to meet Jennie, with whom he was corresponding.¹³ There they became engaged; they married in Berlin on 14 July after a stay in Venice and wintered in Egypt, following medical advice for Jennie's precarious health. (R.J. Williams' narrative of Jennie's life

¹⁰ Williams, *Jennie McGraw Fiske*, 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16 ff.

¹² White, *Willard Fiske*, 53.

¹³ Williams, *Jennie McGraw Fiske*, 48 ff.

arguably does most justice describing Fiske's long and silent courtship of the wealthy, astute and consumptive Jennie through unsent poems¹⁴ and unuttered sentiments.)

Egypt proved inhospitably warm and fever-ridden that winter. With Jennie suffering acutely, the Fiskes hastened to Venice by early May 1881, where Jennie was grateful to have been conveyed "once more into a Christian world."¹⁵



Dahabiyah on the Nile, where the Fiskes (visible astern) spent their honeymoon.

¹⁴ Fiske's poems to Jennie were privately printed (on 111 pages) in fifteen copies under the title *J.* (Florence: The Art of Printing Press, 1887).

¹⁵ Williams, *Jennie McGraw Fiske*, 61 ff.

First Petrarchs

At Venice, Willard Fiske's correspondence with his contacts at Cornell first touches rather casually on Petrarch. In a letter of 20 May¹⁶ to Harris, he states:

In one of the furniture boxes are a few books. 2 of them (new vellum binding) by Gråberg, belong among Icelandic books. All the others but one are Petrarchs, which go in my room by themselves. As other Petrarch books arrive put them with them.¹⁷

Dated invoices from booksellers in Italy corroborate this date of 20 May: Fernando Ongania on the Piazza di San Marco sent an invoice to Fiske on 18 May for five titles, two of which were clearly editions of Petrarch (one a two-volume work) and one referred to as "Macola Centenario," most likely Ettore Macola's compilation *I codici di Arquà*,¹⁸ published 1874, which marked the "Quinto centenario dalla morte de Francesco Petrarca." On 19 May, Gio. Paoletti sent a note on paper without letterhead apprising Fiske of the availability of two editions of the *Rime*. The first of these is *Le rime col commento del Filelfo*, a folio volume published in Venice in 1478.¹⁹ A letter from the Libreria Casanova in Torino, dated 21 May 1881, is addressed to Fiske "presso i Sigg. Munroe," bankers in Paris. Ten Petrarch titles are listed on the verso of the letter.

The record of Fiske's completed purchases while in Venice in May (excluding the list from Libreria Casanova) thus appears sparse—five titles in six volumes—but includes two antiquarian editions of the *Rime*, one from the Incunabula era and one in a compendium from 1642.²⁰

¹⁶ The dateline at the head of the letter is actually "Venice, June 20," with no year indicated. Notes in pencil on the letter doubt the date, with good reason, given Fiske's comment that his ailing wife's relative strength will permit the party "to leave for Paris day after to-morrow." The party in fact departed Venice 21 May 1881.

¹⁷ The version quoted in Fowler, *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection*, x, reads: "In one box are a few books; two belonging among the Icelandic books. All the others but one are Petrarchs, which go in my room by themselves. As other Petrarch books arrive put them with these."

¹⁸ Ettore conte Macola, ed., *I codici di Arquà: dal maggio 1788 all'ottobre 1873. Raccolta de poesie, pensieri, memorie, sottoscrizioni, amenità, manifestazioni del sentimento nazionale, componimenti di donne italiane e straniere* (Padova: Stabilimento Prosperini, 1874). The Ongania invoice is in the Daniel Willard Fiske papers, #13-1-1165. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

¹⁹ The date line at the foot of the note may include a location, but the word following "Di" is not legible to me. (The note is in the Daniel Willard Fiske papers, #13-1-1165. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.) "Paoletti Giovanni, libraio antiquario" is among the booksellers listed under Venice in the *Bibliografia italiana*. Parte seconda, anno 6, n. 16 (31 Agosto 1872): 72. (Digital version accessible through Google.com)

²⁰ Francesco Petrarca. *Le rime di M. Francesco Petrarca estratte da vn svo originale. Il trattato delle virtù morali di Roberto, re di Gervusalemme. Il tesoretto di Ser Brvnetto Latini. Con quattro canzoni di Bindo Bonichi da Siena* (Roma: Stamperia del Grignani, 1642). In Fowler, the citation for this edition includes a

Nonetheless, there is a possibility that Fiske, at this time or perhaps earlier, corresponded farther abroad in search of antiquarian Petrarchiana. A letter from Edward G. Allen of the Agency for American Libraries in London, dated 20 June 1881, states that Fiske's "letters of April & May came to hand" and further notes that "[t]he Petrarch books will receive immediate attention." A previous letter from Allen (by a clerk's hand) on 9 April does not mention Petrarch.²¹ Absent from the correspondence in the Daniel Willard Fiske papers are copies of his letters to Allen in April and May. The importance of this correspondence lies in the implication that Fiske, preoccupied with his wife's failing health and virtually fleeing Egypt for a more temperate Italy before traveling on to Paris and preparing to embark for America, was nonetheless systematically inquiring through booksellers across Europe about the availability of works by Petrarch in May and possibly April, and not merely sending on to Harris a few titles he had had occasion to procure in Venice.

On 21 May 1881, Willard and Jennie Fiske began their journey from Venice to Paris, as Jennie had regained enough strength for the road.²² By the evening of Wednesday, 25 May, they were at the Hôtel du Rhin in Paris. Not a week later, invoices heavy in Petrarch appear in the correspondence. The Librairie de Léon Techner figures prominently among the booksellers offering Fiske volumes of Petrarch early during Fiske's stay in the city. Nonetheless the collected invoices of June through August show Fiske in contact with multiple firms in France, Germany and Italy, with the evident purpose of acquiring anything in print relating to Petrarch. From May through 14 July, the Fiskes' first (and only) wedding anniversary falling on that day, at least seventy-seven titles by or pertaining to Petrarch appear in the accumulated invoices, distributed among the booksellers Allen, Baer, Calvary, Casanova, Fontaine, Loescher, Ongania, Paoletti, Reinwald, Rouveyre and Techner.

The number of books is a minimum figure, because in some instances the bookseller appears to convey several titles with his correspondence without giving a precise number. Of the indicated titles invoiced through 14 July, none appear to be works by Petrarch translated into French.

generous note pointing out that "[t]he Petrarch portion is a page-for-page copy of cod. Vat. 3196, the so-called 'Fragmenti' which ... had come to the Vatican Library ... in 1600." See also the citations for Vat. Lat. 3195 and Vat. Lat. 3196 in the bibliography (296 ff) of Frederic J. Jones, *The Structure of Petrarch's Canzoniere: A Chronological, Psychological, and Stylistic Analysis* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer; Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 1995).

²¹ Edward G. Allen to DWF, 20 June 1881 and 9 April 1881, both from London. Daniel Willard Fiske papers, #13-1-348. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

²² DWF to Caroline W. Fiske, 20 May 1881, from Venice. Daniel Willard Fiske papers, #13-1-348. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. ("Jennie feeling a little stronger we leave here to-morrow (Saturday) for Paris, going as far as Turin [with plans] to be in Paris by Tuesday night.")

In a letter dated 13 July to Judge Douglass Boardman, Fiske recounted preparations for the celebration of Jennie's and his first wedding anniversary, which of course coincided with Bastille Day. His gift to her was "a fine set of ivory toilette-brushes" and other articles Jennie had apparently desired; *en revanche*, Fiske had "a suspicion that I am to receive also a 'cadeau' in honor of the anniversary, for Jennie has had several suspicious private interviews with Professor Crane."²³ Indeed, "Jennie surprised me...by the connivance of Professor Crane, with a book for which I had been longing—a most expensive affair—with one of those superb bindings which are so famous in France—the sight of it would make President White's mouth water and fill his heart with envy."²⁴

A search of known correspondence among all the actors here reveals nothing about the identity of the book apart from the reference to the binding Fiske described to George Harris with such pleasure in his missive of 20 July, excerpted at the beginning of this discussion. Thomas Frederick Crane (1844-1927) was the still-young Romance languages professor with interests in folklore and Renaissance literature who became chairman of his department and eventually dean and acting president of Cornell University. Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918), the first president of the university, was for decades a friend of Fiske's and had appointed him first university librarian; a scholar and diplomat, he was like Fiske an avid and deeply knowledgeable book collector. One may easily assume that a collectors' rivalry motivated Fiske to remind Harris of the secrecy in which he was compiling his Petrarch collection.

Thus the title of this Petrarch translation, Jennie's gift to Willard, escapes the record of correspondence, at least at the moment where it might most likely have surfaced. The number of invoices surviving in the Fiske correspondence is considerable for this period, showing Fiske to be in frequent and rapid contact with booksellers in England, France, Germany and Italy. Through these booksellers he inquired and ordered broadly with respect to the Petrarch literature, but an examination of these invoices offers no indication of French translations. Yet Fiske's letter to Harris of 20 July clearly (and unsurprisingly, given Fiske's sojourn in Paris most of the summer) mentions purchases in the language:

Of translations [of the *Rime*] I have all the leading ones in English, French, German and Spanish. Of the Latin works I have a large number of originals and versions in various languages.²⁵

One may discern a hint from Fiske's choice of words that Jennie's gift was not a translation of the *Rime*, as Petrarch's Italian poems are the work he does explicitly mention elsewhere. The physical facts, however, predominate, and they are two: the work

²³ DWF to Judge Douglass Boardman, 13 July 1881, from Paris. Daniel Willard Fiske papers, #13-1-348. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

²⁴ DWF to Caroline W. Fiske, 14 July 1881, from Paris. Daniel Willard Fiske papers, #13-1-348. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

²⁵ DWF to Harris, 20 July 1881, from Paris. Daniel Willard Fiske papers, #13-1-348. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

is in folio, and the exquisite binding, Fiske tells his mother, is of the type “so famous in France”—and, presumably, of French workmanship.

The 1882 catalogue

In November 1882, a year after the Fiskes returned from Europe and Jennie McGraw expired at her husband’s cottage on the Cornell campus, Willard Fiske published in an edition of 160 copies *A Catalogue of Petrarch Books*. This compilation listed the poet’s works (and works about the poet’s works) “chiefly gathered together during a sojourn at Paris in the Summer of 1881.”²⁶ The prefatory note explains the haste with which this preliminary catalogue came to press, having been “privately printed solely with the view of facilitating the increase of the collection.”²⁷ This first catalogue of Fiske’s Petrarch acquisitions is thus a resource for confirming what Fiske had in hand after his first major purchasing effort in Italy and subsequently in France, accented by frequent exchanges of correspondence with booksellers in Germany.

A perusal of the French translations of the *Rime* in the 1882 catalogue virtually eliminates this category from contention for identification with Jennie Fiske’s gift. Thirteen citations appear in chronological order on pages 43-44. The eldest of these dates from 1538. Six of the titles are octavo (Fiske uses 8°); the others are 12° or 16°.

Petrarch’s writings in Latin are arranged by work in the original language followed by translations. Of all the translations into French of the Latin works, only one is in folio (f°):

Messire François petracque des remedes De lune & lautre fortune: prospere & aduerse :
nouuellemēt Imprime a Paris. On le vend a Paris par Pierre Caouduol a lenseigne de lescu
de Bretagne. (...) M.D.xxxiiii.²⁸

Fiske notes the binder of this volume is Masson-Debonelle.²⁹

An examination of the copious correspondence and many book lists exchanged between Fiske and quite a number of booksellers during that summer of 1881 reveals surprisingly

²⁶ Willard Fiske, *A Catalogue of Petrarch Books* (Ithaca: [s.n.], 1882), prefatory note, [5].

²⁷ Fiske cites three catalogues of special utility in his collecting: Attiolo Hortis, *Catalogo delle opere di Francesco Petrarca esistenti nella Petrarcesca Rossettiana di Trieste*; Giuseppe Jacopo Ferrazzi, *Bibliografia petrarchesca*; and Antonio Marsand, *Bibliotheca petrarchesca*.

²⁸ Fiske, *Catalogue of Petrarch Books*, 22.

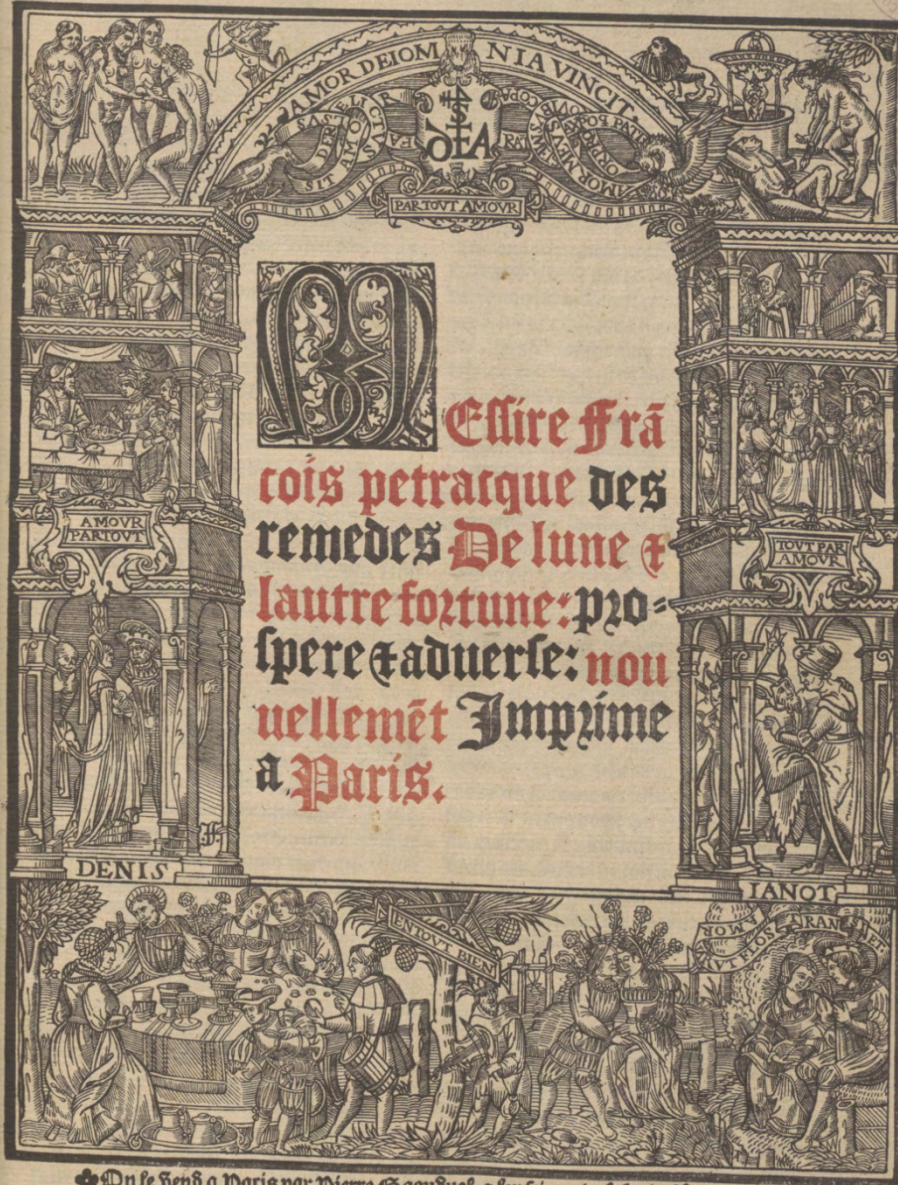
²⁹ There are several references on the Internet to bindings by Masson-Debonelle, who were the partners Germain Masson and Charles Debonelle. A “Katalogkladde” accessible (autumn 2008) on line in pdf dated 21 November 2005 by Sebastien Hauge Lerche of the auction firm Bruun Rasmussen mentions on page 41 in a listing of Bossuet’s *Discours sur l’histoire universelle* that its “jansenist bindings” were “by Germain Masson and Charles Debonelle ... workmen of Charles-François Capé [who] took over his workshop after his death in 1868.”

few translations of Petrarch into French, if any, and certainly not the 1534 *De remediis* into French, whose presence in the lists would have eliminated it as a possibility for Jennie's gift. Yet French translations appear in the 1882 catalogue—not only the thirteen renditions of the *Rime*, but also a total of eleven of the Latin works. The absence of purchase documentation in the correspondence does not prove there were no invoices for

French translations, but it is possible that some transactions in Paris were accomplished in person and not via post, and that documentation of these personal visits to booksellers did not survive as correspondence has.

Following images:

- 1) Title page of *Messire François petracque des remedes De lune & lautre fortune: prospere & aduerse* (...) M.D.xxxiiii. Fiske Petrarch Collection, Cornell University Library.
- 2) Incipit page of prologue, second book of *Messire François petracque des remedes De lune & lautre fortune: prospere & aduerse*.... Fiske Petrarch Collection.



BEsire Fra
 cois petraque des
 remedes De lune &
 lautre fortune: pro-
 spere & aduerse: nou-
 uellemēt Imprime
 a Paris.

On le vend a Paris par Pierre Gaouduol a lenseigne de l'escu de Bretagne

Prologue.

Facillet. lxxvi.

Et commence le prologue de maistre francois petracque au
second liure de lune & de lautre fortune qui traicte des ad-
uersitez que on se repute auoir en ce monde
ainsi comme faie le premier
des prosperitez.



Et toutes les choses qui oncques
me pleurent a l'ye ou a escouter
oncques a bien pou tiens ne sen af-
fist ne adioinct plus parfondemēt
ne plus fermement en mon entendement ne
ne tourne plus souuent a ma memoire que le
dieu d'ung nomme heracitus. C'est a s'auoir que
toutes les choses qui oncques furent sont tou-
tes faictes selon plaids / debat et discord. Et
brapement il est ainsi / et ce tesmoignent a
bien pou toutes choses. Les estoilles obuient

au fermement rauissable. Les elemens con-
traires lung a lautre se combattent ensemble.
Les terres treblent. Les mers sont flots. L'air
se croulle. Les flambles croissent. Les vents
demainēt guerre immortelle. Les temps estri-
uent lung a lautre. Vng chascun a soy auicqs
tous. Printēps est morte. Este sec. Autōpne
mol / puer herupe & froit. Et ce qui est appelle
changemēt de tēps est guerre. Les choses mes-
mes dōcques ausquelles nous nous arrestōs
& entēdōs par lesquelles nos sommes nourris

p

Identifying the 1534 French *De remediis* translation as Jennie's gift is therefore not difficult by this process of elimination. Although no written evidence is available, one may infer that Professor Crane arranged for this purchase at Jennie's behest. The wording of Fiske's relation at receiving it ("a book for which I had been longing") hints at the possibility Fiske himself knew who was the vendor of this copy—and that he expressed his interest in acquiring it to either Jennie or Professor Crane.

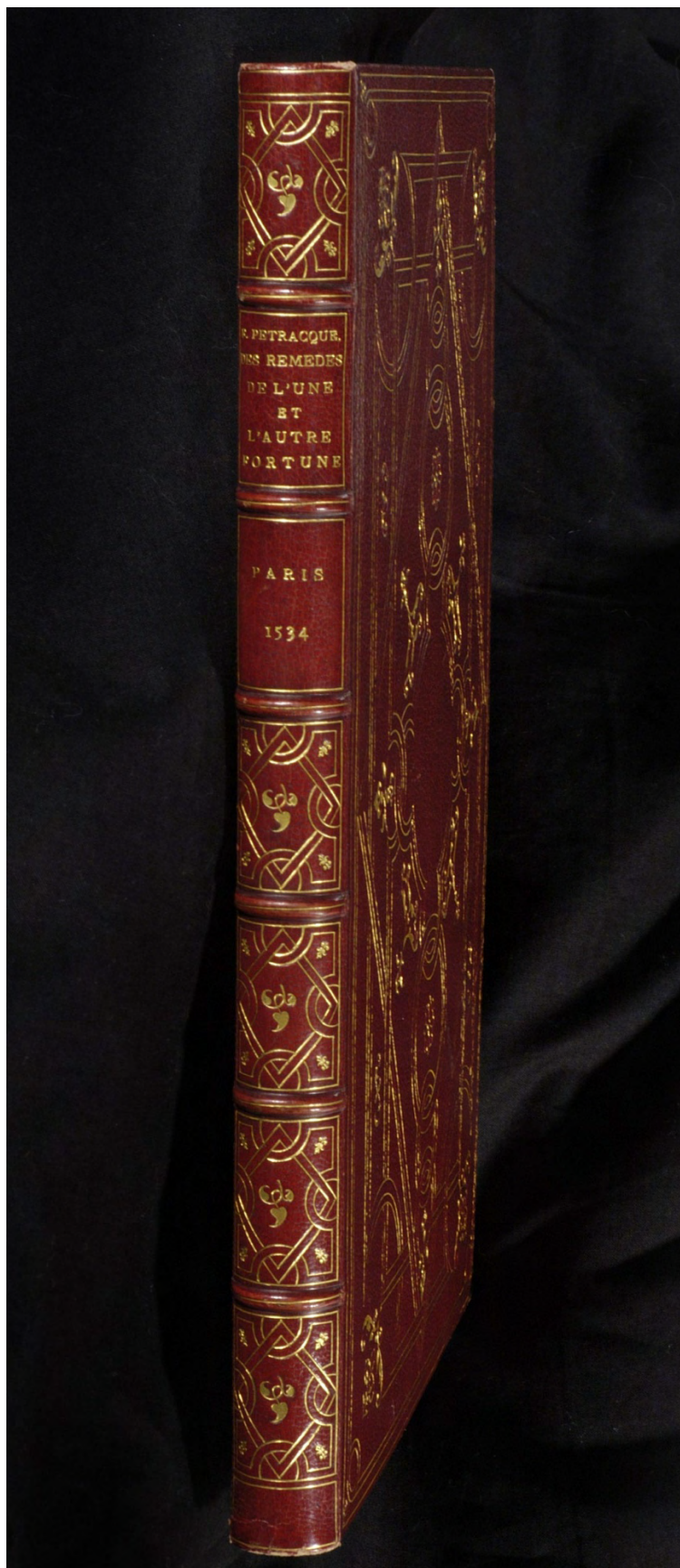
The text of this copy of the 1534 French *De remediis* is complete, with a title page in red and black, the title surrounded by generous woodcuts depicting states of love (inter alia "Amour partout" and "Tout par amour"). Fiske in 1882 described the book as in folio (f°); Mary Fowler's cataloguing entry³⁰ relies on Fiske's fuller description in his *Bibliographical Notices*,³¹ yet adds detail on variant quires, describing the work as "f° in 6's, except (N, O, II)⁴." A selective examination of the paper (not heavy, but durable and clean) shows no evidence of watermarks, and thus it is not possible to identify a manufacturer through this means. The chain lines are vertical, and with the signatures (a typical quire has the first four of six leaves signed) support the determination of "f° in 6's."³² A few scuff-marks aside, the binding, which Fowler, again relying on Fiske, confirms as "[r]ed morocco and gold, by Masson-Debonelle, the design copied from a binding in the Marsand collection,"³³ is in excellent condition. This copy of *De remediis* in translation remains one of the most beautiful books in the Petrarch Collection.

³⁰ Fowler, *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection*, 19. See also Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 80 ff., for a discussion of folio quires.

³¹ Willard Fiske, *Francis Petrarch's Treatise De Remediis utriusque fortunae: Text and Versions. Bibliographical Notices*, 3 (Florence: Printed at the Le Monnier Press, 1888). See Fowler, *Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection*, 19.

³² See again Gaskell, *New Introduction*, 84 ff for standard formats and the chain lines of laid papers. Quires N, O, each folio in 4, are the final gatherings of the first part of the book. Quire II may have been physically in 4 at printing, but only three leaves are bound, signed II¹⁻³; and the text is complete.

³³ *Ibid.*, 27. Fiske refers to the Petrarch collection of Marsand in the Louvre as destroyed. Fowler, in an entry describing Marsand's *Biblioteca petrarchesca* ... (1826) (op. cit., p. 357), clarifies that the collection "was wholly destroyed in the conflagration kindled in May, 1871, by the French communards" (*Catalogue of the Petrarch Collection*, 357).





Preceding images: Masson-Debonelle binding of *Messire François petracque des remedes De lune & lautre fortune: prospere & aduerse* (...) M.D.xxxiiii. Fiske Petrarch Collection, Cornell University Library.

In the title of Petrarch's treatise ("Des remèdes de l'une et l'autre fortune, prospère et adverse"), one can read a harbinger of this couple's fate. Seventy-seven days after the exchange of gifts, Jennie was dead. A bereft Fiske left Cornell for Florence fifteen months later, having resigned his academic appointments in the midst of controversy over Jennie's will.³⁴ In the catalogue descriptions of 1882, 1888 and 1916 there is no reference to Jennie's having made the 1534 French *De remediis* her gift to Willard during that Paris summer.

In *Francis Petrarch's Treatise De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae: Text and Versions*, Fiske published a bibliographical study more detailed than any of his other writings on books, save those writings devoted to his Icelandic collection. Perhaps this work, thorough in its descriptive cataloguing and enriched by the compiler's preliminary and final notes,³⁵ was Fiske's remedy in the face of his grief and fortune.

³⁴ For the will case see White, *Willard Fiske*; and Williams, *Jennie McGraw Fiske*. Willard Fiske won the court case, and his wife's estate, on appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

³⁵ The organization and extent of Fiske's prefatory and specific notes suggest the accrual of considerable information on the history of *De Remediis* between the hasty publication of the 1882 catalogue and the 1888 issue of this bibliographical study.



Willard Fiske at the Villa Landor, ca. 1900

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Willard Fiske lived in the Villa Landor in Fiesole. He traveled frequently throughout Europe, to Egypt and to America. In 1891, while in the Alps, he brought together his small but remarkable collection of Rhaeto-Romanic imprints. He sent the books forthwith to Cornell. At mid-decade, in the space of three years, Fiske assembled what remains one of the pre-eminent Dante collections. This trove he likewise dispatched to Cornell. His Icelandic and Petrarch books, however, stayed with him until his death in 1904.³⁶ These books were closest to him. Only with his death did they traverse the Atlantic a final time, in the spring of 1905, to take their place among the special collections in the Cornell University Library.

³⁶ He died not in his villa at Florence, but suddenly at Frankfurt-am-Main, 17 September 1904, of natural causes.