

that formed such a prominent part of the Strawberry Hill collection were pregnant with possibilities for any print collector who knew his Granger, and Kirgate and the Hardings were only too happy to meet that demand.

Kirgate died in 1810, and the sale of his collection was conducted by King & Lochée over ten days that December, immediately followed by a further day's supplemental sale. The auction catalogue contained multiple copies of Strawberry Hill Press items, over eighty lots on the second day, and in the supplemental sale ninety-eight lots of "Books Printed chiefly at Strawberry-Hill." On the ninth day there were more than two hundred drawings and prints of the house in twenty-nine lots, with the artists listed including Carter, J. C. Barrow, Edwards, the Hardings, and Kirgate himself. This was followed by sixty-nine lots of prints in the supplemental sale, many of them related to Strawberry Hill. Both Edward and George Harding appear among the successful bidders (Silvester had died the previous year) and it seems clear that what was on offer was the remains of Kirgate's stock.

#### IV

The first of the three extra-illustrated copies of the *Description* here discussed is chosen because it represents precisely what a collector with no connection to Walpole or his circle could have acquired from the Hardings' shop in Pall Mall. Unlike the two other copies that will be considered, it is known and recorded: it has been at the Huntington Library, San Marino, for over one hundred years, having been acquired by Huntington at the sale of Robert Hoe's library. It is bound in green morocco with a title page printed in black, red, and blue, and it has a total of seventy-three additional items bound into it, the large majority of which have been listed by Nicolas Barker.<sup>13</sup>

The backbone of the illustrations is formed by thirty-two portrait prints by the Hardings, largely stipple engravings from portraits at Strawberry Hill, of which the earliest is dated 1792, the latest 1806. These stipple engravings are almost all after Silvester Harding, who with his brother Edward was the leading figure in providing drawings for engraving in stipple, whereas it appears that his son George was primarily a painter and copyist.

In addition to the Harding stipple engravings, there are twenty-nine miscellaneous prints or printed items. These vary from the readily obtainable, such as the views of Strawberry Hill from Birch's *Delices de la Grande Bretagne* (1791) and from Boydell's *History of the River Thames* (1794–96), to items more directly associated with the Press at Strawberry—for example, Edwards's scarce etching of Kirgate, scarce because (as Edwards explained to Bull in a letter of 18 December 1784, when presenting him with a copy) "Mr. Walpole thought fit to be offended at its being done & therefore its publication will be suppressed." Bull of course pasted Edwards's print and his letter into his copy of the *Description*, whereas the

13. Barker's helpful list includes the extra-illustrations from the Huntington copy under discussion, reference 131207, together with those of sixteen other copies. It does not include the second of the three copies of the *Description* described in this paper (Newberry Library, Chicago), nor does it include a copy illustrated by the Hardings at New York Public Library (reference Stuart 1057).