

indicates that Slater had a most intimate knowledge of all of Wise's activities. Moreover, and most significant I think, Slater was secretary of the Browning Society some several years before Wise became secretary of the Shelley Society, and thus, before Wise, had prior access to the firm of Richard Clay and Son, the firm which produced practically all of these forgeries. I understand that Messrs Carter & Pollard were of the opinion in 1934 that Slater was dead; but he was not dead at all, he was very much alive but very quiet, and after 1934 suddenly left London and took up residence in Bath where he remained another 10 years, dying in 1944. His books then came up for auction the following year, in 1945, and then lo and behold it was discovered that Mr Walter Brindley Slater had almost as many forgeries as John Henry Wrenn, some fifty-nine, including two proof copies of the forgeries. Hence it has always been my conjecture that, if there are co-conspirators with Wise in the manufacture of these forgeries, Slater I think must be held to some extent complicit. I have broached his name on every occasion, I do it now, but every time I mention it to Carter and Pollard they simply pooh pooh the whole idea. It seems they have enough to do without bringing in some new individual, particularly one who has no evidence behind him. Slater appointed Wise executor of his Will, Wise appointed Slater executor of his Will: still another indication of the close affinity between these two men. So we have Wise, then Wrenn, then Slater, and next again on a purely numerical basis, one must count Harry Buxton Forman, now known to be involved in forgeries. Forman had 41 of the forgeries. Sir Edmund Gosse was at one time, or more than once, accused of being a conspirator. Chiefly these accusations came from Miss Fannie Ratchford, former Curator of Rare Books at Texas, but that accusation has never been substantiated. I don't think it can be. Gosse had only half as many forgeries as Forman, and all of Gosse's forgeries were outright gifts to him, as far as we know, from Wise himself. Thus we have, you might say, this first tier of collectors, Wrenn, Slater, Forman, and Gosse in that descending order, all of whom knew Wise personally.

Then there is another group of three gentlemen. First among them, I would think, would be Oliver Brett, later Viscount Esher, who had a considerable number of forgeries and who was vastly annoyed when the *Enquiry* came out in '34. It was Esher who more than once wrote to the *Times Literary Supplement* demanding an explanation of Wise. How many books Esher had I have no way of telling, at least as yet, but apparently he did have a large supply. It must also be remarked that F. R. Halsey had a very extensive collection of 19th century literature, again of an unknown number, though I suppose a count could be taken because I believe all of them went to the Huntington