

meet an undergraduate who has been taught by a student and s/he tells me they feel they have had a course with me. That is enough.

And the burning issue of 1959? I am still married to the same man, a dedicated scientist and clinician who taught me how to do without sleep. Our two daughters, born while I was in graduate school, survived a working mom. We now exchange books on women. Both did master's programs in public health. One is a risk-assessment specialist working in environmental clean-up projects in California, the other is a pediatrician doing intensive care and public health research in Texas (although she majored in art at Wellesley, and took the survey course with Elizabeth Pastan). On vacation, we read and work-out and travel together. Between us all (with two sons-in-law) we can manage in Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Russian.

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## SCANDALOUS ASSUMPTIONS: EDITH RICKERT AND THE CHICAGO CHAUCER PROJECT

Long before Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons shared the secrets of Hollywood celebrities in their newspaper bylines, gossip appeared as a particularly feminine discourse. Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* depicts herself, to the outrage of her fifth husband, sitting in the company of her "gossib . . . Alisoun" and telling all the secrets, however embarrassing, he entrusted to her (III.529-30).<sup>1</sup> But if gossip might be understood from at least the Middle Ages forward as a discourse *of* women, a discourse in which they actively engage, it can also function more invidiously (as the *Wife* herself acknowledges throughout her Prologue) as a discourse *about* women. This connection is particularly evident in the case of the female medievalist whose life and accomplishments I have researched off and on for the past five years, Edith Rickert. The lesser praised partner of the famous "Manly and Rickert" editorial team, she has been the subject of a number of rumors, documented and undocumented, concerning her sexuality. In fact, my interest in Rickert began as a result of just such gossip. I will begin, of course, by sharing it.

This conversation occurred sometime around 1992, while I was in graduate school. With some fellow graduate students and a couple of our learned professors, I happened to be discussing the gendered politics of textual editing during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of these professors intentionally provoked me by declaring that no woman had ever edited a major Middle English author. I will spare us his random theorizing on this

phenomenon—about the inherent differences between feminine and masculine interests in literary study—that surrounded this statement. I imagine I looked cross, and then self-satisfied, as I found an answer contradicting his claim. I responded with a single name: Edith Rickert. He smiled and said something like, “Oh, she doesn’t count; she was sleeping with Manly.” This is not a direct quotation, but the suggestion was clearly that Rickert was involved with the enormous manuscript research at the University of Chicago (perhaps was even at Chicago itself) only because of a personal—i.e., romantic, sexual—relationship with John Matthews Manly, the “real” editor of the *Canterbury Tales* project. Rickert’s work on the edition was, by implication, merely clerical. I have since encountered this assumption about Rickert elsewhere, most surprisingly in the archive of materials about her in the University of Chicago library, as well as in some of the responses to the edition.<sup>2</sup> This was an assumption, it would seem, that may have plagued her during her lifetime.

I never forgot this professor’s dismissal of Rickert’s work. So when the editors of a project then called the *Historical Encyclopedia of Chicago Women* were looking for someone to write an entry on Rickert, I was more than happy to oblige. This project would give me an excuse, I told myself, to read through the materials in the Special Collections at Chicago’s Regenstein Library and clear her name once and for all. Happily, I found much evidence contradicting the rumor about Rickert’s clerical function. A host of materials bear witness to her scholarly expertise and accomplishments. But I could not locate what I wanted: unequivocal evidence that she and Manly were not romantically involved. I produced an entry on Rickert, and then a chapter on Manly and Rickert, that recuperated her intellectual career, especially her editorial work on the *Canterbury Tales* project.<sup>3</sup> But neither of these publications could speak directly to the issue that provoked my initial interest in her career. So it is here that I will tell all I found, and what eluded me, in that archive.

I found an enormous quantity of letters, typescripts, clippings, and materials addressing Rickert’s intellectual and sometimes personal life. All of her letters to and from her parents during the years she spent as an undergraduate at Vassar College were in those files, among other correspondence, equally well-preserved, that spanned her lifetime. Thus my great surprise when I found almost no letters to or from John Manly. Crucially missing were letters or notes from the period between Rickert’s graduation from the University of Chicago with her PhD in the fall of 1899 and the period of her unofficial appointment at Chicago, where she began teaching in the summer quarters in 1914. Between 1900 and 1909 Rickert lived in England, supporting herself by writing, editing, and performing manuscript research for American academics who were unable to travel. One of those academics may have been Manly. But there are few letters

to Manly from this period; a couple of journal entries record their correspondence. There are, however, various texts to fill this gap in the archives.

The first item one encounters when engaged in this kind of research is the University's Biographical File. Rickert's contained a trove of information not easily accessible beyond Chicago. It had a copy of a former student's, Fred Millett's, privately printed memoir of Rickert, which contained some of the personal reminiscences of her for which I was searching.<sup>4</sup> It also had a copy of a paper, "Edith Rickert at Vassar and the University of Chicago," delivered by Phyllis Franklin at the MLA convention in 1984.<sup>5</sup> This document was particularly interesting because it intimated the wealth of materials awaiting me in her private papers. Franklin's paper suggested the answer I had been hoping to find in Rickert's own materials: "For years she and a friend, an English medical student she met while doing research at the British Museum, had talked about what was then a fairly unconventional arrangement, setting up housekeeping together when each had completed her studies" (1). This suggestion about Rickert's friendship with Kate Platt may be attenuated by something Franklin mentions shortly thereafter concerning Rickert's last years: "Aware that she had not long to live, she continued to work on the Chaucer edition and began a novel about her own life, hoping to explore an [a]spect of it she had never before discussed" (2). Whether by design, or because I was looking for an alternate narrative to Rickert's life, Franklin's paper suggested to me that perhaps Rickert had an alternative lifestyle; that is, perhaps Rickert was a lesbian.<sup>6</sup> Such a narrative would finally vindicate her because it would disarm the assumptions about her and Manly that have otherwise circulated.

The inference drawn from Franklin's paper was all the more appealing because it provided a positive argument about Rickert that could be substantiated. Ultimately, however, the materials I read at the Chicago archives told a different story. Without any such narrative for her, I had to return to the weaker position of trying to prove a negative: that Rickert was not involved with Manly. In this attempt, I set myself a quixotic task, for here it is certainly not the case that Rickert remains innocent until proven guilty. Rather, she stood from the very beginning guilty by association.

Anyone seeking clear evidence of a romantic relationship between Rickert and Manly, or Rickert and anyone else for that matter, is to be sadly disappointed. While boxes of personal correspondence can be found among her papers preserved in the Chicago archives, none clearly evidences a romantic relationship. There are no love letters among the materials from her years at Vassar or from those she spent in England following her graduation. In fact, most of Rickert's correspondence is of a semi-professional nature in the sense that her friends were always intellectuals. There are boxes of postcards from

Fredrick J. Furnivall and from the poet and naturalist, John Burroughs. From the notebooks she kept faithfully during the period she was in England, one can see that Rickert was most excited by meeting scholarly luminaries like Israel Gollancz and W. P. Ker, to whom Furnivall introduced her at meetings of the Philological Society while she was in London. She writes extensively of her female friends, the other women she meets in the boarding houses she inhabits in London, many of whom are also striking out on their own in London. One of these women, Kate Platt, is a medical student with whom Rickert found much in common. Platt and Rickert would become lifelong friends, even after Rickert's eventual return to the United States. Not only do Rickert's diaries tell of her plan to share an apartment with Platt in London (as Franklin emphasizes in her paper), those diaries also tell us something of their mutual interests beyond their professional careers. She and Kate are both interested in "palmistry," and when Kate reads her hand in order to predict her future, Rickert asks if she will marry *and* if she will be a successful writer.<sup>7</sup> In another entry, Rickert similarly records how she and Kate imaginatively prophesy each other's future and their discussion of "the marriage question." Here is Rickert's record of Kate's prophecy for her, in which we may be licensed to read the desires of Rickert herself as they may have appeared to Kate:

I want to write mine and look back after 10 years. Stay in London for two or two and a half years—in about 10 years write a novel which is a great success. Meantime, I am to marry in 5 or 6 years perhaps. Man will be an Englishman, with a touch of Irish—may be called to U of Chicago as professor—literary man. Tall, thin, clean-shaven, gray eyes, black hair, a trifle bald, good bearing, tremendous will, stronger than mine, money enough to live comfortably—not wealth. Rather a mixture I think—but I like it.

This description of her future husband is interesting both for the way she (or Kate) imagines him and for his possible association with the University of Chicago. Fondness for one's graduate institution seems in no way a recent invention.

In this same notebook, in which Rickert generally mentions important dates such as the birthdays of her parents and siblings, she records on New Year's Day, 1897 that "It is N's birthday to-day—and I have thought of him very often but never to wish things different." This is as close to evidence of a hometown sweetheart that we have in Rickert's materials. The context of the remark is more telling than the statement itself. Rickert was clearly occupied with thoughts of her future, an imagined future that included marriage as well as literary success. My guess would be that this "N" is the same "Ned" who appears in a few letters to her parents written from Vassar. He is mentioned abruptly in those letters, which may indicate familiarity, when he gave her gloves for Christmas in 1888.

About the gift she writes to her parents: "I really do not think he ought to give me such nice presents, because—well, because I can never return his kindness, you know."<sup>8</sup> There is little like this elsewhere in Rickert's papers. I would also note a casual mention of "an IM," later identified as "an Interesting Man," while traveling in June of 1900 with Vassar students of her own, who "asked permission to call." Her journals record a slight correspondence with him, now referred to as the "Nomad," "just for fun—to see what will happen."<sup>9</sup> He fades from view quickly. Rickert does not bother to write about him, whether he called or not, in any detail. She records the fact of his letters arriving, more than recording anything contained in such correspondence.

For her relationship with Manly specifically we are not much better off in terms of a paper trail. From the evidence of the documentation preserved, one might conclude their relationship was purely professional. Though she has often been called Manly's student, even by some contemporary documents, that label does not effectively address the way they came to know each other. In fact, calling Rickert Manly's student effectively tinges our sense of their relationship in an unfortunate, and I think inaccurate, way. While Manly, as head of the English Department at Chicago, had to examine her and give final approval to her dissertation because the professors with whom she had worked were away during the summer quarter in 1899, it would not be fair to call him her teacher. Rickert met Manly on June 30, 1899, after she had written a full draft of her dissertation, and completed her degree that September, less than three months later. Her journals record her initial and then shifting impressions of him. A journal entry dated July 13, 1899 records: "My 1st impression is completely wrong. He is small & ugly; but his forehead is fine & thoughtful, his eyes are keen, his voice pleasant & sympathetic & his smile and lang[uage] charming. He's not a mummy—nor merely erudite, but delightful in his own way which is a bit queer." Though she was at first put off by him, she clearly grew to appreciate his demeanor and found his appearance more imposing once she learned how intelligent he was. Her journal also records her thoughts after their initial meeting on June 30 at which Manly's mind clearly made more of a positive impression than his appearance: "Interviewed Prof. Manly — little, beardless, boyish; with a drawl; something of a fish in the eyes and mouth; but he found out in ab[ou]t 3 min[utes] very much that I didn't know & my respect for him rose rapidly."<sup>10</sup>

The events of Rickert's life, particularly her graduation from the University of Chicago in 1899 and then her work almost twenty years later with Manly in Washington in the Cryptographic unit of Military Intelligence in 1918, suggest a growing friendship that is not duly recorded in her letters or journals. Some scattered references to him can be found in her journals, like the following, dated 20 June, 1901: "Red Letter Day. Letter from my mentor, approving my Offa [an article she eventually published in *Modern Philology*] and strangely enough—the

Scribner story—almost tempted to wish he hadn't seen that."<sup>11</sup> That more of these connections between Manly and Rickert can be made neither through her journals nor through the letters she saved remains peculiar. She returned to the US from England because "after 1907 big financial panic reduced the sale of her stories—having no income she returned to New York [in 1909] to accept an editorial post."<sup>12</sup> Eventually she would return to Chicago to work on passing a bill for vocational education, particularly for girls. Sometime after her return to Chicago, Rickert began her summer session teaching at the University. From here, it would seem, Rickert accepted Manly's invitation to join the codebreaking group in Washington.

Though her official appointment with the University of Chicago began in 1924, when she became an associate professor, Rickert had begun teaching as an assistant in the department of English as early as 1914. This summer session work appears sporadic, yet it looks as if it led to her official appointment and to a fairly quick promotion to full professor in 1930, after only six years in rank. What Manly might have done to get her the assistantship or the official appointment we do not know. Nothing I read in his correspondence, hers, or in the records of the English department sheds light on the situation. It is not a period in her life that is well attested in the existing records. What many accounts of her career stress is her teaching interests during this period in Chaucer and especially modern British literature (about which she and Manly would eventually write handbooks). But we might also recall that the Chaucer project began in earnest in December of 1924, when Rickert departed for England and began to make arrangements for the photostating of the manuscripts. Financial arrangements had begun earlier, in the fall of 1924, which is the same date of Rickert's official university appointment. Clearly, Rickert and Manly were working together on Chaucer materials before this date.

If this were all that I had found, I do not know what I might have been able to conclude about their relationship, or what I could say in response to the gossip circulating unevenly about her precise role in the Chaucer project and the scholarly community generally at Chicago. It certainly appears from reading all the various records, both personal and departmental, that the University administration, British and American scholars, various editors, poets, intellectuals and, of course, Rickert's students, took her very seriously indeed. And although I constructed from these records the essays on her scholarship and her particular contribution to the Chaucer project that I previously mentioned, those statements were not analogous to an argument that Manly and Rickert had a purely professional relationship. At that point, all I could conclude was that there was no material or documentary evidence that they had had something other than a professional relationship. Yet that lack of evidence would not address the scandalous assumptions circulating about Rickert that I so

desperately wanted to quash. And, indeed, what I eventually uncovered in Manly's papers helped to confirm my worst fears about those assumptions.

In John Manly's papers, most of which concern his official business as head of the English department, I found a typed letter from Rickert dated 6 September, 1919, in which she discusses her qualifications as an editor for a project Manly is about to discuss with a university or publishing bigwig. I am not certain which project she calls "the series that I am suggesting." Clearly Manly should already have known her qualifications as an editor, but Rickert seems to be reminding him of various small details of her editing experience at the *Ladies' Home Journal* for an upcoming opportunity in which he "may have a chance to talk it up in Zurich." Manly appears to be away from Chicago at the moment; Rickert's letter records her Chicago address at its opening. The closing salutation, however, gives us the only impression of Manly and Rickert's relationship beyond the scholarly pursuits such documents typically address. With a clearly familiar nod to Manly's golf game, she ends:

Here's wishing power to your drive. Make it three hundred yards at least, and cut off Mr. Walton's waving plume. With no more love than usual, but something of a wish that I had you here this minute,

Yours for luck in the game,  
[signed] Edith

I cannot pretend to know exactly the context of the letter. I can imagine ways of arguing that it does not *necessarily* imply a romantic relationship between them. But in lieu of a scholarly context in which she needs Manly's expertise "here this minute," the "wish" of which she speaks and the "usual" amount of "love" she sends appear remarkably personal, even romantic. Yet to the extent that I have been able to examine the materials in the University of Chicago archives—including with Rickert's papers those of Manly, the official records of the English department and the records of the Chicago Chaucer project—this is the *only* evidence I can find that characterizes their friendship beyond the professional.<sup>13</sup> It remains, I think, a crucial characterization.

Once I found this letter, I had little idea what to do with it. How could I let it shape her entire career? If it can be taken as positive evidence of a personal relationship between them, even one they managed to keep absolutely secret, then how might we understand that relationship and their secrecy? Neither Rickert nor Manly ever married, and one wonders, if they were indeed romantically involved, why they did not make their attachment "legitimate." One possible answer can be found in correspondence in the Presidents' Papers and the University Board of Trustees' minutes. These university records document the ugly fashion in which Manly's engagement to the Contessa Lisi

Cecilia Cipriani, an assistant in Romance languages, had disintegrated and with it her teaching career at Chicago, from which she was dismissed in 1904, fifteen years before the letter from Rickert and ten years before she would begin teaching, in however unofficial a capacity, at the University. For a general description of the situation, I cite a letter to me written by Daniel Meyer, Associate Curator and University Archivist at Chicago's Department of Special Collections:

Cipriani and Manly were engaged to be married; the engagement was broken at Manly's initiative; Cipriani's relationship with Manly was then used by the University as the reason not to renew her teaching appointment; unsuccessful attempts were made to secure a position for Cipriani at other universities; and Cipriani subsequently appealed, in vain, for redress from the Board of Trustees. In one letter, Cipriani suggested that Manly's behavior in breaking off the engagement sometime in 1903 was the product of "neurasthenia" accompanied by "abuse of liquor and drugs."<sup>14</sup>

Meyer's summary of the incident is suggestive for a contextualization of Manly's relationship with another woman at the university. Meyer continues: "After the Cipriani affair and the painful rumors it spawned, Manly seems to have become unusually circumspect in his private affairs . . . . Whatever the nature of their private feelings, he and Edith Rickert invariably maintained an absolutely correct professional relationship in public throughout their long working partnership." What I would suggest at this point is that the Manly-Cipriani event may have led to (or revealed) a nepotism policy, official or unofficial, at the university, and it was for preservation of Rickert's professional career that the two may not have married. The irony of this theory proposed to explain the situation should be evident. By his attempt to protect her career at the University of Chicago by maintaining "an absolutely correct professional relationship in public," Manly in fact cast further doubt upon her status in their "long working partnership" on the text of the *Canterbury Tales*. Whatever his guilt in the incident that led to Cipriani's dismissal, Manly appears to have been damned if he did *and* damned if he didn't with respect to Rickert's scholarly reputation.

In any case, and there are many scenarios tenuously suggested in this essay, Manly himself was unflinching in his respect for Rickert and vehemently demanded that others recognize her position as his scholarly partner. When a British journalist, for instance, writing a piece on the heroic editing project of these two Americans, called Rickert Manly's "assistant" he fired back a letter to the newspaper correcting their error, clearly stating that Rickert was his equal in every aspect of the work. And though Manly wrote movingly of Rickert's taste, talents, and "capacity for enormous drudgery" in the preface to the eight-volume *Text of the Canterbury Tales*, he has remained unable to protect her or her



participation in the work from their detractors.<sup>15</sup> As I have complained elsewhere, Rickert was all but erased in the critical discussion of and scholarly awards given to “Manly’s” edition of Chaucer.

It is curious that no one is able to accommodate a sense of her work’s value with the notion of a personal relationship developing between the two scholars. Now that women (and academic couples) are more familiar figures in the university, one might hope that assumptions would change. But I myself began this project with them—even if in inverted form—hoping to salvage Rickert’s scholarly career with a discovery of the impossibility of an attachment to Manly. The full reading of the biographical materials concerning Edith Rickert will have to include both her central work on the Chicago Chaucer Project *and* her potential involvement with Manly. In a large sense it is no one’s business but their own, and if indeed they were romantically involved that is how they conducted themselves. But the industry of scholarship to which she devoted herself will not really allow us to remain silent on the matter. The scandal keeps reappearing as the gossip continues to circulate and as it continues to affect the assessment of her accomplishments. So I find myself writing about a possibility that I hoped never to have to admit. Since I feel as though, throughout this essay, I have been putting words in Manly’s and Rickert’s mouths, I will try to counterbalance that effect and end by quoting a letter Manly wrote to Karl Young, another notable medievalist of the era, dated 26 May, 1938, that is, three days after Rickert’s death:

I cannot at all express my admiration and affection for her. She was, I think, the most variously talented woman I have ever known, capable of having attained eminence in painting, in music, in literature, and in scholarship. In addition to her many talents she was marvelously endowed with energy and vitality. I shall miss her more than I can say.<sup>16</sup>

What better testament of love?

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For providing me with various kinds of information about Edith Rickert, I want to thank Daniel Meyer, Roy Vance Ramsey, Virginia Leland, and Michael Crow. James Wimsatt and Beverly Boyd helped me contact Mike and Virginia respectively. I am sorry that they are no longer with us. Mark Allen, Susan Crane and Susan Arvay provided me with materials from past issues of the *Chaucer Newsletter*. Douglas Bruster, Derek Pearsall, and Marjorie Curry Woods read the essay and helped to improve it with their suggestions.

<sup>1</sup> The *Wife of Bath’s Prologue* is quoted from the *Riverside Chaucer*, gen. ed., Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

2 The essays of Germaine Dempster on Manly and Rickert's edition have been praised by many textual scholars for their clarification of their work. However, Dempster started the trend of shortening "Manly and Rickert" to simply "Manly," an abbreviation that was subsequently taken as a statement about who did the real work of editing. Here is Dempster's explanation: "Chaucerians need not be reminded of the admirable collaboration of Professor Manly and Professor Rickert nor of the latter's full partnership in the realization of their great project. But as several chapters were written after her death, and nothing indicates to what extent some of the views held by Mr. Manly had been reached in collaboration, it has seemed better, in the title and throughout this article, to avoid references to the double authorship." See Germaine Dempster, "Manly's Conception of the Early History of the *Canterbury Tales*," *PMLA* 61 (1946): 379-45, at 379. In a *PMLA* article of 1948 the recourse to Manly only "for the sake of brevity" appears in a footnote. By 1953 there is no reason to mention it at all. The "views" and "opinions" contested or refined by Dempster's essay are "Manly's" alone. This unfortunate tendency has been discussed elsewhere by me and by Roy Vance Ramsey, *The Manly-Rickert Text of the Canterbury Tales* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1994). Virginia Leland, one of Rickert's students, also attempts to emend the record when she notes, "Professor Robinson erred in citing Mrs. A. J. Dempster (Germaine Dempster) as Mr. Manly's 'principal collaborator.'" "Professors Manly and Rickert and Medieval English Studies in Chicago," *Medieval English Studies: Past and Present*, ed. Oizumi Aiko and Takamiya Toshiyuri (Tokyo: Center for Medieval English Studies, 1990), 56-60, at 59.

3 See "Martha Edith Rickert," in *Women Building Chicago, 1790-1990*, ed. Rima Lunin Schultz and Adele Hast (Indianapolis and Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, forthcoming) and "John Matthews Manly (1865-1940) and Edith Rickert (1871-1938)," in *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline, Volume Two: Literature and Philology*, ed. Helen Damico (New York: Garland, 1998), 297-311.

4 Fred B. Millett, *Edith Rickert: A Memoir* (Whitman, MA: Washington Street Press, 1944).

5 Phyllis Franklin, "Edith Rickert at Vassar and the University of Chicago," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association, December 29, 1984, Washington, D. C., 1-10. A copy of this paper can be found in Rickert's Biographical File in the Department of Special Collections, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

6 Franklin cites Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz on the development of "smashing" at Vassar. Defined in the letters of a Vassar woman, smashing was "an extraordinary habit . . . of falling violently in love with each other, and suffering all the pangs of unrequited attachment, desperate jealousy & c, with as much energy as if one of them were a man" (Franklin, 9). See Horowitz, *For Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York: Knopf, 1984). Horowitz is clear, though, that these intense and sometimes life-long female attachments were not the same as lesbianism, cf. 188 ff.

7 Journal entry dated 3 January, 1897. Edith Rickert Papers, Box 2, folder 1.

8 Letter, Vassar, December 25, 1888. Edith Rickert Papers, Box 1, folder 3.

9 Journal, Edith Rickert Papers, Box 2, folder 7 dated June 30, 1900.

10 Journal, Edith Rickert Papers, Box 2, folder 6. Cited from Franklin, 4, editorializations mine.

11 Journal, Edith Rickert Papers, Box 2, folder 10. The "Scribner story" referred to here is Rickert's first major American publication, "As to Wooing --- There Was None," *Scribner's Magazine*, vol.29 no.5, May 1901, 630-34.

12 Letter to Helen Waddell, April 14, 1934. Edith Rickert Papers, Box 1, folder 8.

13 A June-July 1996 letter from Roy Vance Ramsey told me of a photocopy he once made of a "one-page self analysis by Rickert that was probably written fairly close to her death because it is in the part of the collection of manuscript jottings rather than in her personal papers," that "either she inadvertently let . . . go with some papers or else it was among the editorial pages found after her death.

In fact it was so personal that I destroyed it after skimming to see if it had anything relevant to my work." Ramsey's book is the most extensive contextual evaluation of their editing project.

14 Letter from Daniel Meyer, dated 17 October, 1996. Neurasthenia, or "nervous exhaustion," is defined as "a condition marked by fatigue, loss of energy and memory, and feelings of inadequacy, once thought to result from exhaustion of the nervous system." *American Heritage Dictionary*, ed. William Morris (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969; 1981), 882-3. I have not had the opportunity to return to the University of Chicago archives to read these materials myself (nor to search for the document mentioned by Ramsey). I thank Mr. Meyer for his brief summary of the materials in these archives and his narrative of their circumstances, as well as his permission to cite them here.

15 *The Text of the Canterbury Tales, Studied on the Basis of All Known Manuscripts*, 8 vols., eds. John M. Manly and Edith Rickert (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), 1.viii.

16 Letter, *The English Department Papers*, Box 14, folder 3.



Edith Rickert

Courtesy of Department of Special Collections, University of Chicago Library