

IMPORTANT FACSIMILES

The Library has for many years made a practice of securing facsimiles of not only notable printed books which are in the high-price range, but also famous manuscripts which can never come on the market again. The Ellsemere Chaucer, the Book of Kells, the Lindisfarne Gospels, are purchases of recent years, and in somewhat the same category are the several splendid replicas of the remarkable works of William Blake. Two other recent ones are worthy of special note. The first is a magnificent volume of facsimile reproductions from the *Holkham Bible Picture Book*. This work, issued by the Dropmore Press, London, in 1954, is in a fine binding of red morocco and vellum. It provides a great body of illustrations for students of medieval life.

The 14th-century illuminated manuscript from which this book was produced was purchased in 1952 by the British Museum for a price of £95,000. It had belonged to the celebrated family of Coke, Earls of Leicester, who lived at Holkham Hall, Norfolk. The manuscript, one of the finest examples of early English art, was not intended to be an illustrated Bible but, rather, a pictorial representation of the creation and fall, and the need of a redemption. Its date is about 1325-30, and it is written in Anglo-Norman, indicating it was designed for use by laymen.

THE BAMBERGER APOKALYPSE

It does not happen very often that a new one-volume work costs as much as £45 on publication. It is even rarer that the high price is felt to be justified and that the Library can afford to pay it. This is one of 500 printed of the *Bamberger Apokalypse*, produced by the Insel Verlag in Germany, creators of sumptuous facsimiles of other illuminated manuscripts and of the Gutenberg Bible. The new volume is marvellous to see, containing faithful reproductions of the exquisite manuscript miniatures on 59 plates, in four colours, silver and gold. The large folio (17½ by 12 inches) is bound in parchment and half leather, boxed in a wooden case. The carefully reproduced plates are exact copies of the original miniatures, the sizes of the originals and in coloration hardly distinguishable from them. The *Bamberger Apokalypse*, made about 1000 A.D., one of the most original and beautiful of the Reichnauer Malerschule manuscripts, was brought to Bamberg in the