

# A Panoply of Acquisitions and Other Updates

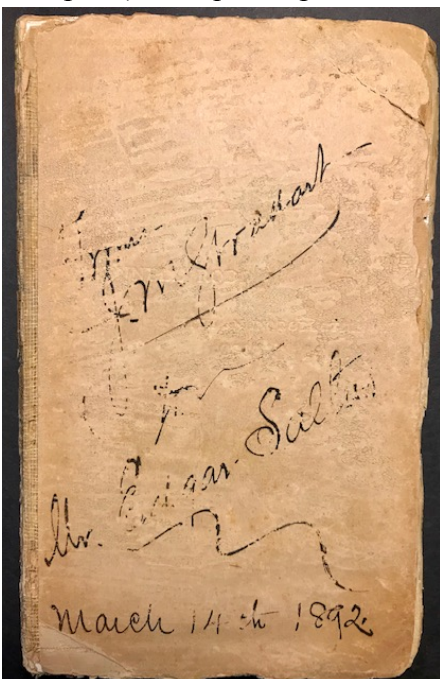
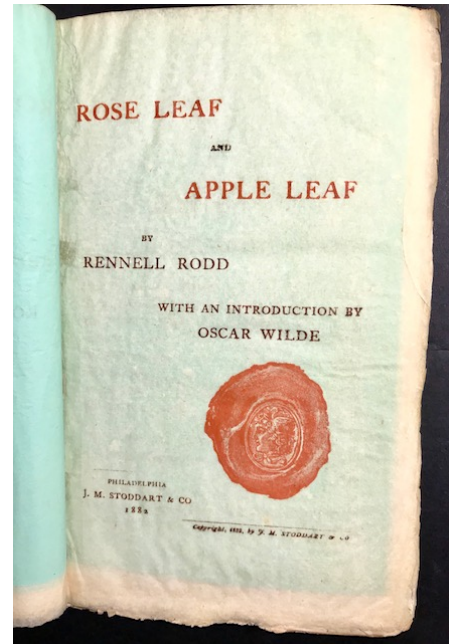
It has been some time since I updated the new acquisitions to the Mosher Collection. It's not that I haven't been buying; it's just that I haven't taken the time to provide these updates and stories of how some of these items made their way to the collection. So without further ado, here are a few of the books and brief stories of what has transpired since my early 2019 posting.

## BOOKS FROM MOSHER'S LIBRARY

### Rose Leaf & Apple Leaf:

There have been some really interesting additions for this part of the collection, exciting enough to at least rouse my passions. The first is something which found me rather than the other way around. At the March 2019 NYC Book Fair, Cliff Graubart of the Old New York Book Shop (Atlanta, GA) set up next to me. While we were both unpacking our books, Cliff says to me that he brought along something unusual related to Mosher and that he had trouble deciding what it actually was or what he'd charge for it. Now that's enough of an introduction to pique my attention any day of the week, so after just about everything was in place, he pulls out this little somewhat shabby looking book without its covers and the remaining book block protected by acetate.

The book presented to me for examination was the "edition de luxe" edition of Rennell Rodd's *ROSE LEAF AND APPLE LEAF*. With an Introduction by Oscar Wilde. Philadelphia, PA: J.M. Stoddart & Co., 1882 (perfectly follows Stuart Mason's leaf count, so complete). It's quite a precious thing with excessively thin, delicate leaves, printed in brown on one side only, and then interleaved throughout using green tissue-like paper said by the publisher to have been left over from the Rittenhouse Mills which supplied paper for the American Revolution. The book is, how shall we say, fussy. An aesthete of the period would love it.



This little volume bears Mosher's early Japan vellum printed bookplate and an inscription between the Philadelphia publisher Stoddart and the American writer, Edgar Saltus: "From J. M. Stoddart to Mr. Edgar Saltus. / March 14th 1892." Stoddart and Saltus were not only good friends, but were also involved in an 1895 publishing venture aimed at promoting the work of American and European (mostly British) authors. It was called The Transatlantic Publishing Company of which Stoddart was the founder and Edgar Saltus was one of the stockholders and patrons. Stoddart was the editor of *Lippincott's Magazine* and for many years also its general literary manager. He had quite a connection with Oscar Wilde, and worked with Wilde while he was on his American tour in bringing out Rennell Rodd's *Green Leaf and Apple Leaf* in 1882. But why does this de luxe issue of *Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf* (sans vellum cover) with Mosher's bookplate have an 1892 inscription between Stoddart and Saltus? It seem quite

possible that it must have been passed on to Mosher from Saltus. In 1905 Mosher eventually contracted with Stoddart to bring out his own copyrighted edition of *Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf* formally published in 1906. In Mosher's bibliographical notes he discusses and generously quotes a letter Stoddart supplied answering Mosher's questions about the thin parchment paper which was printed in brown ink, and its interleaved green paper. Oliver C. Sheean, a later Mosher Press freight clerk who also took on the task of recording the books in Mosher's home library (his hand-written records are in the Bishop Collection). Sheean recorded two copies of Stoddart's 1882 American edition in Mosher's personal library, often not mentioning any associations or inscriptions in his entries. I have seen the one copy still maintaining its vellum cover with the actual letter from Stoddart to Mosher and accompanied by the signed contract to publish the 1906 Mosher edition (private collection). The other is this inscribed copy inscribed by Stoddart for Saltus. Both copies carry Mosher's bookplate (Bishop Collection).

I should also note that this copy not only has that inscription, but also contains Mosher's minus and plus marks in the margins of the two Table of Contents pages. He also uses a code: "M + O" at five places in the Table of Contents. Thanks to Nolan Goodman for directing my attention the fact that the "M + O" markings are of those specific poems and sonnets Rennell Rod wrote which were included in Rodd's *Myrtle and Oak* (Boston, Chicago: Forbes and Co., 1902), a copy of which was also in Mosher's library. Perhaps Mosher was researching this prior to having his own publication copyright assigned. Additionally, I should add that this copy of *Rose Leaf and Apple Leaf* (1882) is from the same collection source I bought maybe a dozen or so Oscar Wilde titles with Mosher's bookplate, that being from Frank O. Walsh III of the Yesteryear Book Shop in Madison, Georgia. Cliff Graubart bought some of Walsh's inventory, so this is how it ended up with him in New York, Cliff having told me it was originally from Frank Walsh.

### *Behind My Library Door:*

All in all the above is one fine addition to the Mosher Collection, but it's not the only book from Mosher's library which was destined to arrive here. Another came from Christine Liska at The Colophon Book Shop in Exeter, NH. Her description, or perhaps that by her husband Robert, ran like this:

"Williamson, Dr. G. C. *Behind My Library Door*. London: Selwyn & Blount (1921), boards and cloth in dust jacket. First Edition. With the Thomas B. Mosher bookplate of two griffins "Ex Libris Mdccxcvii" / "Thomas B. Mosher" on front pastedown. Also with the bookplate of Sir William Pepperell on the back pastedown, which is puzzling as Pepperell was an 18<sup>th</sup> c. Englishman. One inch chip at bottom of spine of jacket and small chip at top. Book very fine and clean."

Now the Puzzling Pepperell bookplate is easy to answer. This is the bookplate used by Joseph W. P Frost (1923-2008) who lived up in Eliot, Maine. He was a direct descendant of Lieutenant General Sir William Pepperell, Bart. In recognition of that, Joe's full name was Joseph William Pepperell Frost. He was also a cousin and friend of the poet, Robert Frost. My wife and I visited him years ago and I still remember his taking us about his home with room after room of books. This man was an avid collector and advocate for American history and literature. The wonders we saw: a signed Dickens book housed at a landing going down a white baluster staircase, some Doves and other beautiful bindings in a special little room on the first floor, and in the basement shelves of books inscribed to him from his cousin and friend, Robert Frost, all first and special editions with dust jackets. Amazing stuff. Then he took



us over to an old family heirloom chest I believe was covered in cow hide. When he opened it, it was chock full of letters from his famous cousin, the poet. Glory be! Joe's on-line obituary of July 16, 2008 (viewable at [Seacoastonline.com](http://Seacoastonline.com)) reveals that:

Joe Frost surrounded himself with books. They and their authors were his friends and his gateways to the past, which he delighted in visiting. A supremely knowledgeable collector, he shared his love generously, charming friends and audiences with recitations from his favorite authors and donating rare books, manuscripts, art, and artifacts to cultural and historical institutions throughout New England. A skillful orator who stood six-feet, three-inches tall, he was always at home at the podium, where he would peer over his glasses to deliver his hallmark dry wit. No one who knew him will ever forget the grin that used to appear over his dimpled chin as he waited for his listeners to catch a clever turn of phrase. In retirement, he became known to many during his hours at the counter of the Book Guild in downtown Portsmouth, where he could share his enthusiasms and expertise with novice and experienced collectors.

I'd meet Joe at book shows, and he even bought a book or two from me. Many times when I'd stop at the Book Guild bookshop in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Joe would be there behind the counter and entertain us with his stories while assisting us in finding books. When I worked on the bio-bibliography *Thomas Bird Mosher—Pirate Prince of Publishers*, Joe sent me Benton Hatch's Mosher bibliography (printed at Leonard Baskin's Gehenna Press) with Hatch's post-publication notes and changes. The Hatch bibliography remained the mainstay of Mosher bibliography until it was eclipsed by my own Mosher bibliography. I returned the Hatch bibliography with a note of thanks and Joe was honored with an acknowledgement in my Mosher bibliography for his generosity. Incidentally, since Joe's passing, that same Hatch bibliography was sold to me and it's now in the Mosher Press collection along with some of my letters Joe tucked away safely under its front cover. Now another memento from Joe is in the form of Williamson's *Behind My Library Door—Some Chapters on Authors, Books, and Miniatures* with both Mosher's and Joe Frost's bookplates. This trip down memory lane doesn't fully explain the importance of this book however. For that, we have to turn to some of its contents.

To cut to the chase, while Mosher held this book in his hands, he read of the episode where through the good auspices of Swinburne's mother, Williamson gave Mosher's book, *Félice: A Book of Lyrics Chosen from the Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne* to the great poet and writer himself. Indeed, Mosher marked the passages in which his publication was discussed in the last chapter of Williamson's book. There in Chapter XVI, pp. 202-203 Mosher himself read:

I [Williamson] was visiting Lady Jane one day, and showed to her and her daughters a book of Lyrics from Swinburne's Works, that had been published by Mosher, of Portland, U.S.A. so charmingly printed and bound that it was a pleasure to look at it, and in that light Lady Jane appreciated what she termed a compliment to her gifted son. She asked my permission to show it to him, to which I gladly assented.

A little later Williamson sent her this book and a copy of Swinburne's *Heptalogia* in which wanted Swinburne's autograph. As he further recounts:

A little later on I sent both of the books, mine and Mosher's to her, and in her letter of April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1896 now before me, she says: "I shall be very glad to do as you wish, but I cannot give you much hope, for he really gets such endless applications for his opinion upon various writings..." Time went on, I often saw the three sisters, and they frequently alluded to this circumstance. "Algernon," said they, "has got both your books, and some day you will get them back. We frequently remind him of them." The Mosher book he admired, and the selection from his poems was, he considered, a judicious one, but neither of the volumes came back into my hands for six long years.... On August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1902 there suddenly arrived a parcel from Putney containing three books, my own two returned, a copy of Swinburne's poems "from the author" and a quaint letter in guarded terms which I promptly fastened into the *Heptalogia*.

The story goes on, but suffice it to say that I'm sure when Mosher read these lines a discernable smile inched up the sides of his mouth. Swinburne himself saw and held Mosher's selections in *Félice*, admired it, and judged it a judicious selection of his poetry. Now the only thing left is for me to find that very copy with Williamson's bookplate in it. Ah yes, the quest never ends.

### On Friendship:

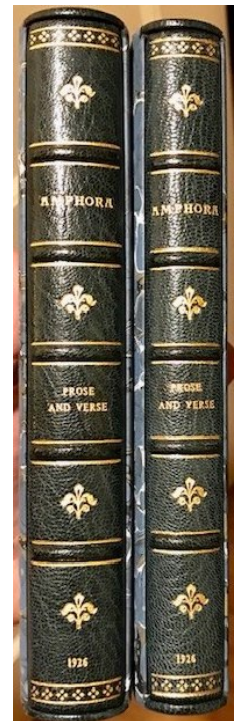
Another book from Mosher's library was procured through Black Swan Books of Richmond Virginia. This is a copy of the Bruce Rogers's designed book of Henry David Thoreau's *OF FRIENDSHIP—An Essay from A week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (Boston: The Riverside Press [Houghton Mifflin & Co.], 1901), with its original slipcase. I have another book from Mosher's library from this same Riverside Press series, Lowell's *DEMOCRACY...* (Boston: The Riverside Press [Houghton Mifflin & Co.], 1901), also in original slipcase, and several other books designed by Bruce Rogers, again bearing Mosher's bookplate. What's striking about *OF FRIENDSHIP* and *DEMOCRACY* is that they actually resemble the dimensions of a Mosher Press publication. Rogers admired Mosher publications, and both men were friends and mutual admirers throughout their lifetimes. One should not forget that the first book bearing Bruce Rogers's name as designer was a Mosher imprint: *Homeward Songs by the Way* (1895), and Bruce Rogers even expressed regrets that he hadn't continued doing designs for the Mosher Press.

## FINE BINDINGS

### Amphora, and A Honey Jar from Mount Hybla:

There have been several bindings on Mosher Books acquired over the recent past. One was a *Rubaiyat* which I posted in my last update, and then from the same source I just received a two volume set of the Mosher Press *AMPHORA*, both the reprint of the first *Amphora* of 1912 (reprinted in September 1926) and the *Amphora—A Second Collection of Prose and Verse Chosen by the editor of The Bibelot*. Both volumes were likewise bound by Tiziano Còdina, a fine bookbinder from Milan, Italy, who did this work when he came for a visit to the then "Petrarch Press" in California. The bindery in Milan is still run by his father at Legatoria d'Arte Giovanni Còdina (Milano). Each *Amphora* volume is bound in high-quality blue morocco with gold tooled spines and a minimum of tooling on the front covers. Both are also housed in matching slipcases with leather head and tail enhancements of each slipcase's mouth. They are quite handsome, but it's not only the bindings which grabbed my attention, but also something in their contents which roused my curiosity about a particular copy of a book by Leigh Hunt.

Back in 2009 I purchased sixteen books which were once owned by Flora Macdonald Lamb (Mosher's erstwhile assistant). These came into the possession of a bookseller who told me the story about how a woman had approached him with a box of books which she said were in an attic for over 50 years. The books were originally purchased in Wyndham, Maine from the Flora MacDonald Lamb sale (I knew about that sale which took place before I seriously collected Mosher). I bought all of them, and the most curious among them was a copy of Leigh Hunt's *A Jar of Honey from Mt Hybla* (1848) which the owner described as a "first edition of this scarce work of vivid essays on Italy's beauty [which] was rebound by Mr. Mosher who owned a publishing company in Portland Maine. The binder had taken the original



glazed pictorial board and affixed it to the interior cover.” Now that sounded intriguing but at the same time a little bit suspicious because I know Mosher’s copy of the book was sold at his 1948 library sale (Catalogue I, entry 222) and nothing in the description indicated it was rebound. When I received the *Jar of Honey* it had indeed been bound in boards much like Mosher’s own publications were bound, but there was more that was curious. Some of the pages show definite markings of smoke damage, and I realized at once that this must be one of the books salvaged from the fire at the publisher’s office at 45 Exchange St. in 1915. But what I hadn’t observed were some markings which now became obvious to me when looking at the two-volume set of the *Amphora*. I don’t know why I hadn’t seen this before, but in again reading selections from the first *Amphora* I first paused to read the two-page “Proem” at the front of the volume. It’s a quoted selection from *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* with Mosher’s accompanying footnote reading:

Those who do not know Leigh Hunt’s *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla* should make haste to read it. It is of the rare sort that never grows old. Preferably the earliest edition which Richard Doyle illustrated (1848) is the one to seek in the catalogue of the old bookseller... If ever there was a book-a-bosom, this is indisputably that blessed volume!

After reading the “Proem” prefixing the entire *Amphora* of 1912, I glanced at my shelves and selected that rebound copy with the smoke damaged pages and pulled it from the shelf. I just wondered if ownership by Mosher could be further corroborated, and so sought the passage quoted in the *Amphora*. I found it on pages 2 and 7. “Oh my god,” I exclaimed aloud to myself, “THERE are Mosher’s customary editorial marks right aside the two separate passages Mosher used in his *Amphora*. Not only was this Mosher copy, and the office copy saved after the first of 1915, but this is THE text source for Mosher’s “Proem” in the *Amphora*, which to Mosher’s heart was “a book-a-bosom... that blessed volume” itself. What a find! It took my purchase of the specially bound two-volume set of the *Amphora* from California to kindle a chain of discovery awaiting me right there on my shelves since I purchased it in 2009. Outstanding!

### The Song Celestial:

A binding from Budapest, Hungary might be nice. Sure, why not. After all, there is already one Hungarian binding in the Mosher Collection. Why not another to keep it company? This is in fact the opportunity that presented itself back on June 23, 2019. I received an email from Adrienne Horowitz Kitts of Austin Abbey Rare Books, a new member of the ABAA from Mt. Vernon, VA. She emailed me saying, “I don’t know if you’ve already seen this, but in case you haven’t, please go to [auction website]. It definitely needs to be in your collection!” I wrote back to her the next day:

Adrienne, Adrienne, Adrienne...

As a matter of fact, I had *not* seen this before. I notice that the book doesn’t show up under “binding” which is how I usually check LiveAuctioneers, but does show up under “vellum.” I very well could have missed this, so offer up prodigious *THANKS* for sending me the heads-up link, and if I get the book I will likewise reward you for the referral. I agree about its suitability for the collection. Rather flashy, and since I have one other Hungarian binding on a Mosher book, this will add to that. Wonder what the story was with Hungarian interest in Mosher’s books. I wonder when Professor Álmos Jaschik actually bound and decorated the cover. Ah well, perhaps mystery is in the confines of the book.

I signed up with the auction house, gave references and card information, and arranged for a call 15 minutes before the item was to be auctioned. Actually I saw another binding on a copy of Dante’s Works, and so got a call about that too. Nailed the Dante. Now would I be able to do the same with the little volume of *Passages from the Song Celestial* by Sir Edwin Arnold as described in the listing from Grant Zahajko Auctions, LLC of Davenport, WA:

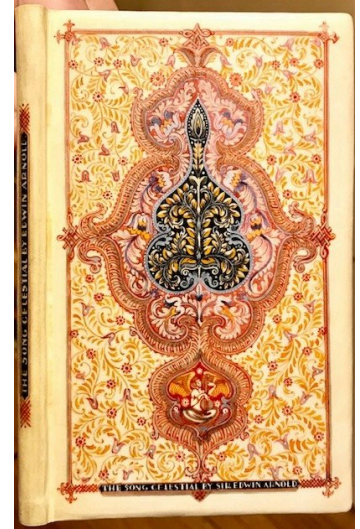
Almos, Jaschik (Hungary, 1885-1950) decorated book. Appears to be hand-painted on vellum. Includes loose typed label 'Designed and bound in the studio of Professor Jaschik Almos, Budapest, Hungary'. Measures 7 x 4.375 inches, 38 pages. VG-EX/EX condition. Published by Thomas Mosher, Portland, Maine. Provenance: Estate of Russell Johanson, Ravenna Rare Books, Seattle, WA.

The bidding was over almost as soon as the book went up for sale. Two other bids were made, but mine was the last bid standing. Yes! Another unusual binding on a Mosher book to be added to the collection, and Adrienne's finders fee went in the mail. I've described the binding:

Arnold, Sir Edwin. *PASSAGES FROM THE SONG CELESTIAL*. Portland, ME: Mosher, 1911. Lyric Garland Series. Intricately painted vellum binding designed and bound in the Studio of Prof. Álmos Jaschik in Budapest, Hungary. Bishop Collection.

Jaschik was a teacher at the Budapest Industrial Drawing School in 1906 and headed the bookbinding and decorative leather work department until his departure in 1920. He was most famed for drawing illustrations for various literary works, and from 1935 onward he worked as stage designer for the National Theatre. His graphics and early illustrations lean toward ornamental Art Nouveau, but his later works of art and fantasy illustration are abundantly rich in detail and minute patterns. The present vellum book cover aptly reflects this detail in design, and is also reflective of the patterns found in period Hungarian folk art in which Jaschik was naturally steeped.

In some ways this beautifully produced cover is reminiscent of the painted vellum bindings of Italy produced for the upper-end visitors from English-speaking countries during the early part of the 20th century, for example the work of the Florentine firm "Giulio Giannini Parchment Works."



## VELLUM PRINTING

### Fragilia Labilia:

In June 2015 a Mosher book printed on vellum surfaced on eBay. The poster/seller out of Sherman Oaks, CA indicated it has been in the family (never found out who "the family" was) since its sale in 1925. I inquired about condition noting what I saw on-line, and the seller wrote back to me that obviously this book is not for you:

Dear L-----, No other copy in this condition / state of this age – this is hand signed by the printer, Thomas Mosher, #3 out of 5 printed on pure vellum. Last sold at Christies auction in 1925. Kept by family / one owner since that time. Other copy of this book (but a different # in the signed Mosher editions, was listed at over \$4000.00) Outside cover could use a professional suede cleaning. No sales tax, no reserve price, no returns. I am asking thousands LESS than the other incomplete and deplorably ravaged Fragilia listed on Ebay for 4995.00, it is in tatters. My price is my price. Do not buy it if you do not want to ... Yes, there is some wear. I will add additional pictures to the listing, as there is another request from a bidder who wants a few more pictures. The messages you send me are unhappy, complaining, and petulant. I have no idea why. Please, please do not bid on my book. You are already unhappy about it. Please, just go away and buy a book that makes you feel happy and content. Kind Regards.

Oh my, is that ever rich. Hmmm, let's see... his book was posted for \$2,800, and in order to purchase, I'm not supposed to ask questions about its condition especially since the pictures were out of focus. That makes sense, doesn't it? Wrong! I had absolutely no idea why he said I was "unhappy, complaining, and petulant" but I knew I had to save that response for posterity. The seller never posted

another picture and with this his response there ended the matter. The eBay listing was dropped several weeks later, and subsequently I was contacted by Vladimir (Werner) Saemmler-Hindrichs. He called me to discuss the book he had purchased from the eBay lister through a phone call, and Saemmler-Hindrichs said he'd quote me the book in the near future. Unfortunately I never received a quote, and the next thing I saw was that Saemmler-Hindrichs, a well known and highly respected book buyer/collector/seller, had a bad stroke and died shortly thereafter on April 11, 2017. So... with condolences to the family, everything I was tracking went out the window and I just had to wait to see if the book would resurface. That wait ended on February 16, 2019 when I received an email from Amir Naghib of Captain Ahab's Rare Books. He was not an unknown to me. We actually met in New York city at a satellite book show running concurrently across the street from the big spring ABAA show. He was representing Lorne Bair Rare Books and I bought a beautifully bound *Don Quixote* in Kelliegram binding from him. Anyway, that was years ago, but I also saw he was featured in the on-line "Fine Books & Collections" website as a "Bright Young Things" article, so I knew him enough to know he was totally legit. He was in the process of cataloguing the book and indicated to me that he thought he'd get in touch with me since my interest in Mosher was posted on the Ex-Libris on-line discussion group, and that he was aware of my "collecting and scholarly interest in materials published by Thomas Bird Mosher." Even though fine/private press books are outside of his interest areas and business, he had nevertheless managed to acquire the book several months before and, after a lapse in time, had started working on its description which he sent to me:



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Symonds, John Addington. **FRAGILIA LABILIA**. Portland, ME: Thomas B. Mosher, 1902. One of 5 copies printed on pure vellum, each numbered and signed by the publisher, this being copy no.3. Octavo (19.5cm); full floral-patterned suede, with gilt-stamped black morocco title labels on spine, and original decorative wrappers bound in; brown morocco doublures, with elaborate gilt-stamped lotus design within triple-ruled border; brown morocco flyleaves; three-color fabric bookmark; [x],ix,45,[15]pp. Early (1925) auction house description tipped onto first blank page; sunning to spine and board edges, hairline crack to upper front joint, though hinges sound; very mild rippling to text, else quite fresh; Very Good and sound.

"Because of homosexuality's official "unspeakableness" in his time, Symonds's plainest homosexual work had to remain private, and within that realm he produced some pioneering work, including several firsts. The poems that poured from him in the 1860s and 1870s and that he distributed to friends in private pamphlets of the mid-and late-1870s and the early 1880s - such as *Lyra Viginti Chordarum*, *The Lotos Garland of Antinous and Diego*, *Pantarkes*, *Rhaetica*, *Tales of Ancient Greece*, *Crocuses and Soldanellas*, *Old and New*, *Fragilia Labilia* - are some of the frankest Victorian homosexual writing, if not always distinguished as literature" (cf. Claude J. Summers (ed.). *Gay and Lesbian Literary Heritage: A Reader's Companion to the Writers and Their Works, from Antiquity to the Present*. (2013)). Rare; only two of the five copies printed on pure vellum are found in the auction record: Mosher's own copy (sold at Parke-Bernet Galleries, 1948), and this copy, originally offered in 1916 at the Anderson Galleries sale "Rare Books from the Library of the late Mrs. Gertrude Cowdin." (#3608)

Indeed, the book was recorded in the auction catalogues:

(first owner) Rare Books from the Library of the late Mrs. Gertrude Cowdin of New York. With Additions. NY: The Anderson Galleries, Inc. Feb. 28-29, 1916, Lot No. 557. [priced copy indicates it sold for \$13.00]:

SYMONDS (JOHN A.). *Fragilia Labilia*. *Ornamental titles in red and green*. Small 8vo, decorated suede calf, doublures of brown morocco, gilt Lotus designs, gilt top, uncut, brown morocco flies. Portland: Mosher, 1902. \*One of 5 copies printed on Pure Vellum.

(second owner) Library of the late Clarence E. Williams of Short Hills, N.J.; Books from the Library of Mrs. Isaac Guggenheim of Port Washington, L.I. and New York; and other consignments. NY: The Anderson Galleries, Dec. 12, 1925 (sale #2006), Lot No. 273:

SYMONDS (JOHN A.). *Fragilia Labilia. Ornamental title-pages in red and green*. Small 8vo, decorated suede calf, doublures of brown morocco with lotus designs in gilt, brown morocco end leaves. Portland: Mosher, 1902. [Amer. Book Prices Current, Vol. XXXII, p. xvi (Chronological List of Sales) records it as bound in calf, on velum, selling for \$15] ONE OF 5 COPIES PRINTED ON PURE VELLUM.



...but there the line of ownership ends and the family who bought it in 1925 and who held on to it until it was offered on eBay remains unknown, except for the fact that it passed to Vladimir (Werner) Saemmler-Hindrichs, then to Amir Naghib of Captain Ahab's Rare Books, and now is finally part of the Bishop Collection of Thomas Bird Mosher and the Mosher Press. Again, just to remind folks that items like this are not the usual part of Amir Haghieb's bill-of-fare at Captain Ahab's Rare Books.

## A LETTER and OFFER FROM CANADA

On January 23 I received an email from a special collections department of a Canadian library:

Good Morning Mr Bishop,

We have a box of about 50 Mosher Press books that we recently found and are not adding to our collections. Having looked at the Thomas Bird Mosher website, I wondered whether you would be interested in accepting them as a donation. I've included a few photos. The books are not in the best condition.

Regards,

XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX

I looked at the photos and saw the motley lot, and wrote back saying I would accept her offer. So several boxes of Mosher books were sent and I received them on February 20<sup>th</sup>. The pictures accurately depicted what I was to uncover in the boxes, most of which were, as she warned me, "not in the best condition." Indeed, many of them were in anything but good condition, and so I went through and winnowed the books down to a few useable ones for the collection, the rest now being stored. Her accompanying note said: "Here are the Mosher Press books. Thank you for accepting them. I hope they are useful and interesting to you. We have kept a sample in our Press Collection, Special Collections Department, so Thomas Bird Mosher is represented. However, we could not keep a large number, therefore I am glad to find another home for these items." I thanked her for the generous gift and sincerely was pleased to have had the opportunity to go through them in hopes that a few might prove to be useful. I wasn't disappointed. Of the books that I have reserved for the Mosher Collection, here are some of those that made it though to my shelves, most bearing a bookplate indicating "The Book of MRH." Nobody in that Canadian library knows who that is. I don't know who that is. What this collector appears to have done in some cases was to marry correspondence of an author with his/her Mosher book. Below are a couple

instances, one with an Arthur Symons letter and the other with a letter and corresponding envelope of Austin Dobson's. This was not an uncommon practice, particularly by early collectors. Sometimes it's a letter involving the particular book in which it was inserted, sometimes a letter associated with the publications of the publisher, and sometimes a letter from the author having no particular significance beyond being sometime associated with the author of the book in which it was inserted. In this case, it's the latter form of association. Anyway, here are the books which were culled from the box of goodies sent from Canada:

-- *Lyrics* by Arthur Symons (Mosher, 1903). Accompanied by a tipped-in July 14, 1922 one page typed letter, signed by Symons, with particulars as to a suggested English and American edition of "a volume of my Translations from Villiers de Lisle-Adam."

-- A copy of the *New Life of Dante Alighieri* Translated by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (Mosher, 1896) with an ownership signature of Godfried Z. Rhoads / Lancaster / Pa / Feb. 10, 97. I just found it interesting that here is a Mosher book bought by a resident of the City of Lancaster which is a city very close to where I presently live. How it ever made its way up to Canada is anyone's guess.

-- A copy of the *A Song of Italy* by Algernon Charles Swinburne (Mosher, 1904), copy No. 75 of 100 printed on Japan vellum. The bookseller label of "The Booke Shop / 4 Market Square / Providence" appears in the back. This Providence, Rhode Island shop opened in 1922 by Mrs. Charles Bradley, Jr. and Miss Elizabeth L. Lustig according to *Geyer's Stationer* of Nov. 16, 1922.

-- A copy of William Ernest Henley's *In Hospital* (Mosher, 1908) with ten lines of hand-written poetry presented as "a little birthday token" on a front endpaper.

-- An author-signed copy of *Lyrics from a Library* by Clinton Scollard (Mosher, 1917).

-- A copy of *Proverbs in Porcelain and Other Poems* by Austin Dobson, with a one page A.L.S (in original envelope) to a "Dr. W. C. Bennett of Hyde Cottage / 63 Royal Hill / Greenwich" replying to an application to use certain of his poems, and remarking, en route, that his output is "so small that it will not bear much borrowing."

Speaking of gifts, another came to me completely unannounced. A while back I received the following book with a brief letter from Joe Phillips of Commonwealth Books:

Dear Phil,

Picked this up as part of a library recently (Mosher's facsimile of Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat*, #29/40 on Japan vellum signed by Mosher). If you can do anything with it, I'd be happy with a store credit (whatever you think is acceptable) that I can put towards a purchase next time I see you. Or if you only think it's worth a coffee, that's fine. Or maybe it's worth nothing—just figured you'd know what to do with it.

Sincerely,

Joe Phillips

Commonwealth Books

Of course I thanked Joe at the very next show we did and indicated I would give him credit on anything he might purchase from Mosher Books. It would have to be rebound, but that was still a very kind gesture by Joe and much appreciated. His offer and request of credit is considered a standing one should he find something in my bookseller's booth in the future.

## ASSOCIATION ITEMS

As I indicated above, sometimes a letter found with a book involves the particular book in which it was inserted. Here is a case of such a letter along with a corresponding inscription in the book itself. Such an item recently entered the Mosher Collection. It involves Mosher's edition of *The Romance of Tristan and Iseult* (Mosher, 1922) as retold by J. Bédier and then translated by H. Belloc. The London bookseller of this "find" was James Fergusson Books & Manuscripts (yes, the same James Ferguson who was editor of *The Book Collector* from 2016-18). Back in May he listed it:

Hilaire BELLOC

**The Romance of Tristan and Iseult. Retold by J. Bédier. Translated into English by H. Belloc. (Old World Series)**

Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher, 1922 [Third Edition]. Paper-backed boards, printed paper label. Spine slightly darkened, free endpapers slightly embrowned. Third Mosher edition (first Mosher edition reprinted, or pirated, from the first, 1903 edition of George Allen), one of 925 copies on Gelder paper, this copy inscribed by the translator, "*Mr René Hague / H. Belloc Kings Land Sept 2/ 1950*", and by Hague, "who gave it to his darling Joan"; loosely inserted a presentation autograph letter signed to Hague from the translator's daughter Eleanor Jebb, 1p. 8vo (very slightly stained), Shipley, 2 September 1950. "Of the limited London edition [of 1903]," writes the incorrigible Thomas Bird Mosher, "three hundred copies only were published at five guineas a copy, an oversight as to the requirements of book lovers comparable only to the manner in which Mr. [Andrew] Lang's Aucassin and Nicolette was originally brought out in England [Chiswick Press, 1887, pirated by Mosher, to Lang's furious protests, 1895]. Beyond question one of the world's greatest love stories finds expression in *The Romance of Tristan and Iseult*, now made accessible in the same series that has brought to light so many other literary introuvables." Hilaire Belloc seems to have been (moderately) unconcerned about being asked to sign a copy of his pirated introuvable a quarter of a century on. His daughter Eleanor Jebb (née Eleanor Philippa Belloc), writes: "*Mr Mervyn Horder of Duckworths asked me to send you one of these as I fear they are out of print. I asked H.B. to sign it for you! He was a bit 'grunty' about it, as he has had too much 'signing' to do!! But I took the blame. With love to all my Friends at Piggotts, Eleanore Jebb.*"

I ordered the book, but first James Fergusson had to apply for an export license. That was successfully achieved and shortly thereafter the book was sent and received here in the States.

Belloc vociferously complained about Mosher's publications being piratical. In a letter to Duff Cooper he wrote on July 10, 1929 that "These little books have a history. They were pirated in America by a Yid called Mosher & sold for a Dollar: me, no money; him, all the money. At last he proposed to treat my Verses in the same fashion, but the worm turned & I told him (being then young & hearty) that if he did I would come cross over to America & beat him with a cane. I specified the cane. I said: 'A light rattan cane'. He replied with a torrent of abuse, but forbore to steal as he had proposed." Notice that the book (with letter I recently received) was published in 1922. Apparently Mosher did not completely forbear, nor did Belloc cease to sign or inscribe Mosher's publications. I have several other Mosher books which the peevish Belloc inscribed, including a copy of his *At the Sign of the Lion and Other Essays* (Mosher, 1916) inscribed "*For Mr Carson / From the Author / H Belloc. / Nov. 12 1923*" and a First Edition copy of *The Romance of Tristan and Iseult* (Mosher, 1904) "*For Lady \_?\_ \_?\_ / from the Quasi-Author / Mayday 1906*" written in Belloc's distinctive handwriting style. The Quasi-author reference evidently refers to his being the translator, not the author.

A second item of some interest is a copy of the "General Index" of 1915 to volumes I-XX (1895-1914) of *The Bibelot*. This volume bears the inscription by Mosher to his long-time friend and fellow member of the Walt Whitman Fellowship, Horace Traubel.

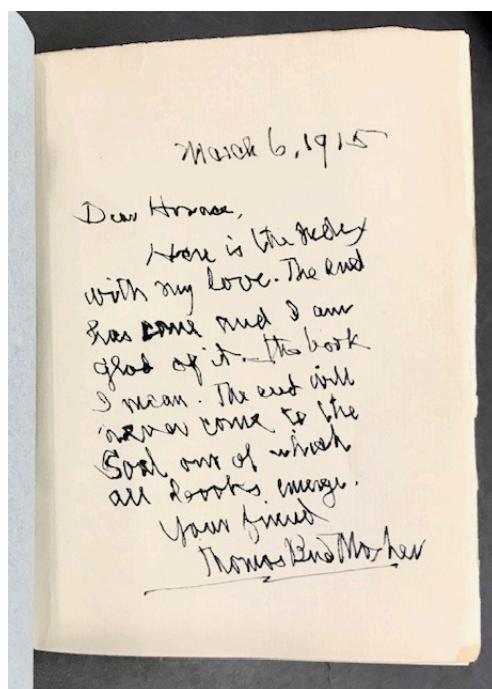
March 6, 1915

Dear Horace,

Here is the Index  
with my love. The end  
has come and I am  
glad of it. — the book  
I mean. The end will  
never come to the  
Soul out of which  
all books emerge.

Your friend

Thomas Bird Mosher



What a lovely inscription to one of Mosher's closest friends. Horace Traubel was the compiler and writer of the Preface for the selections from Whitman entitled *The Book of Heavenly Death* (Mosher, 1905)) and wrote the Foreword to the Lyric Garland Series printing of Walt Whitman's *Memories of President Lincoln and Other Lyrics of the War* (1906), and the Forward to the large, finely printed, and magnificently designed book of *Memories of President Lincoln* published by Mosher in 1912. Mosher wrote an extensive memorial tribute to Traubel in his facsimile edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (Mosher, 1919). There are several inscribed copies of the Index in the collection, including one inscribed by Mosher to its compiler, Milton James Ferguson, so its nice to add this to these holdings.

Lastly, I bought a Japan vellum copy of *The Story of David Gray* by Robert Buchanan published by Mosher in 1900. This was Mosher's 100<sup>th</sup> book, and one of the recipients was the famed owner of Gable's Department Store in Altoona, PA. Gable had a magnificent library which took multiple auctions to sell. He was friends with both T. B. Mosher and Elbert Hubbard, and co-published the facsimile edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* with Mosher in 1919. This particular copy of *The Story of David Gray* (No. 42 of 50) is inscribed by Gable to his youngest son George (1898-1967) who would become the manager of the William F. Gable Company under company president, Robert Blair Gable. The father would depart this earth eight months later on November 28, 1921. Gable's inscription reads: "For / George Pomeroy Gable, / on his / Birthday Anniversary, / March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1921. / With the love and Congratulations / of his father, / William F. Gable. / Altoona, / Pennsylvania. / [flourish]"

So these round off the acquisitions to date. It's always my pleasure to recount what has come into the Mosher Collection, and continue to search and find new material. The hunt never ends until the hunter either loses interest, meets with some calamity, or succumbs to the final fate of each and every one of us.

Philip R. Bishop

September 10, 2019