New Acquisitions

Association Copies, Vellum Imprints & a Cosway Binding

Much has happened since the last post of March 2022. Association copies predominate the new acquisitions, but there are two vellum printings and two lovely binding among those items added:

(1) A copy of *The City of Dreadful* Night (Mosher, 1892) which appears to be a copy owned by a woman who hand-made a bookplate for her copy.
(2) A fabulous "pure vellum" printing of the highly limited 1899 *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, just one of ten copies ever printed and boldly inscribed by the co-publisher, Emilie Grigsby, to an interesting personality in London.
(3) A rather obscure find was an inscribed copy of *The Bibelot* magazine by the Irish poet, Seumas O'Sullivan which also includes an original eight-line poem predating its published appearance two years later.
(4) An Arthur Symons's inscribed a copy of Mosher's printing of *Lyrics* in 1903 to an artist in London.
(5) A copy of *The Growth of Love* (Mosher 1894) is accompanied by Herman M. Schroeter's Omarian bookplate.
(6) A hand-written letter from New York's master printer Theodore De Vinne to Mosher.
(7) A 1908 hand-written letter a Mr. Ray Purington of West Bowdoin, Maine and Mosher's hand-written response to Purington along with the envelope Mosher mailed.
(8) A copy of the *Thomas Bird Mosher and the Art of the Book* exhibition catalogue I inscribed to Francis O'Brien in 1992 bearing his bookplate and ownership note.
(9) A copy of *The Poetical Works of Oscar Wilde* (Mosher, 1908) in a Cosway-styled binding.
(10) Lovely copy of Oscar Wilde's *The Young King and Other Tales*. Mosher, Privately Printed, 1922.
(11) Mosher's copy of the large paper two-volume set of the *Annals of Scottish Printing…* (1890)
(12) Oscar Wilde's *Intentions* (Mosher, 1904), one of six copies printed on "pure vellum"
(13) Inscribed copy of Walt Whitman's *The Book of Heavenly Death* (1907)
(14) Binding on *The Poems of Villon* (1916) & hand-illuminated copy of *Empedocles on Etna* (1900)

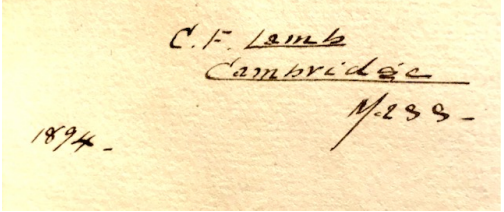
— More detail on each of these acquisitions is provided below —

(1) C. F. Lamb's copy of *The City of Dreadful Night*



In researching the owner of this 1892 Mosher imprint, the only C. F. Lamb listed for the Boston/Cambridge area was found in the 1895 *Cambridge Blue Book* in which "C. F. Lamb" is identified as Carrie F. Lamb, a resident of Cambridge. The bookplate in the Mosher volume was hand-made with the banner motto "Salus Patrae Me Excitat" and her signature appears directly underneath. On the second flyleaf is written "C. F. Lamb / Cambridge / Mass. / 1894". The only other mention of her is in extensive description of a gun she once owned (that's right, a gun!): special order Winchester Deluxe Model 1895 Lever Action Short Rifle.

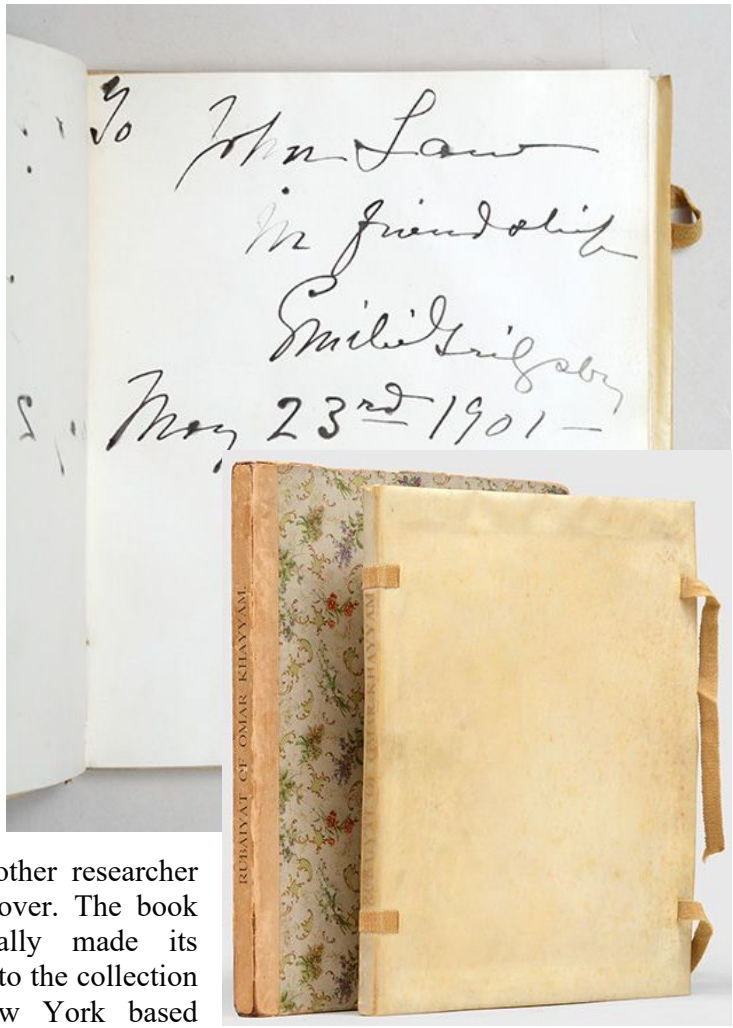
> Lamb died in 1954 and is remembered for "the somewhat unusual fact that she was very well known as a marksman and a hunter of caribou," as one friend remarked. She participated in hunting trips to Canada, was involved in various rifle and pistol organizations, had a collection of "first-class quality and workmanship" firearms such as this rifle and worked for the USO. Multiple issues of the Boston Globe from around the turn of the century list Lamb as competing and winning medals in various shooting competitions.
>
> On the receiver, the two line address and patent markings on the left side and two line model marking on the tang are present, with the addition of "C.F. Lamb./Cambridge, Mass." in fine script on the right side.



Information provided by the consignor states that C.F. Lamb is Carrie F. Lamb, and a 1895 copy of the Cambridge Blue Book confirms a Carrie F. Lamb as a resident. Lamb died in 1954 and is remembered for "the somewhat unusual fact that she was very well known as a marksman and a hunter of caribou," as one friend remarked. She participated in hunting trips to Canada, was involved in various rifle and pistol organizations, had a collection of "first-class quality and workmanship" firearms such as this rifle and worked for the USO. Fitted with a checkered straight wrist stock, with an ebony accented Schnabel tip, attractive grain and a smooth curved buttplate. Accompanying the rifle are several rifle and pistol association medals that C.F. Lamb received during her lifetime. There are a total of 16 medals with many dated prior to World War I.

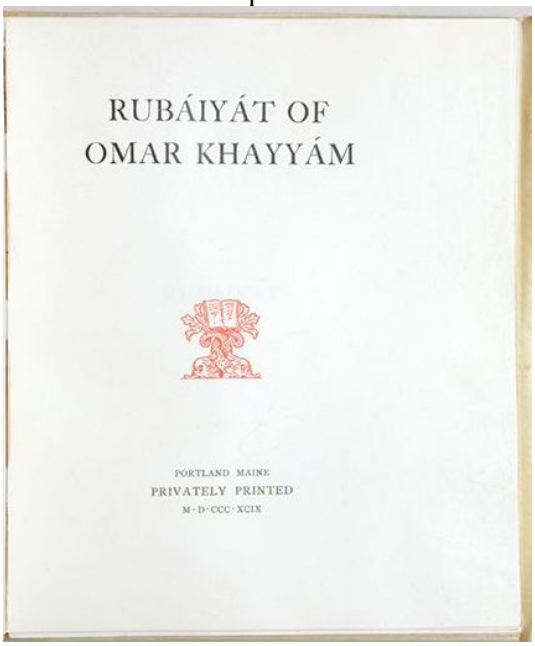
Apparently unmarried, the "Annual Report of the Trustees of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind" Miss Carrie F. Lamb is listed as one of the contributors to the deaf-blind fund, Sept. 1, 1950-August 31, 1951. p. 78. Now I've got to admit that this is perhaps the most bizarre research outcomes I have ever encountered.

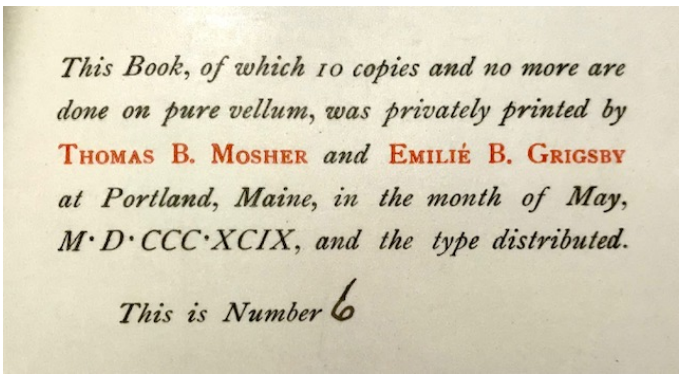
(2) Inscribed *Rubaiyat* printed on vellum



I bought only one book at the April 2022 ABAA International Book Fair, that being from Peter Harrington of London: the 1899 *RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM*, co-published by Mosher and his number one customer, Emilie B. Grigsby. There were only ten copies printed, all on pure vellum, and the co-publishers split them 50-50 (copy No 10 is also in the Mosher Collection). This copy No. 6 of 10 was boldly inscribed by Miss Emilie to John Law (pen name for Margaret Harkness) in London on May 23, 1901.

Margaret Harkness was an English radical journalist and writer living in London. Emilie Grigsby most certainly met her in London and was there at the time of this inscription (Mosher himself met with Miss Emilie in London during this same time). Emilie Grigsby and Margaret Harkness were both fiercely independent women. The bookseller's description notes "this book has a compelling early provenance" and there is probably a fascinating story behind the Grigsby / Harkness relationship --but that will have to wait for another researcher to uncover. The book eventually made its way into the collection of New York based publisher and theatrical impresario, Crosby Gaige.





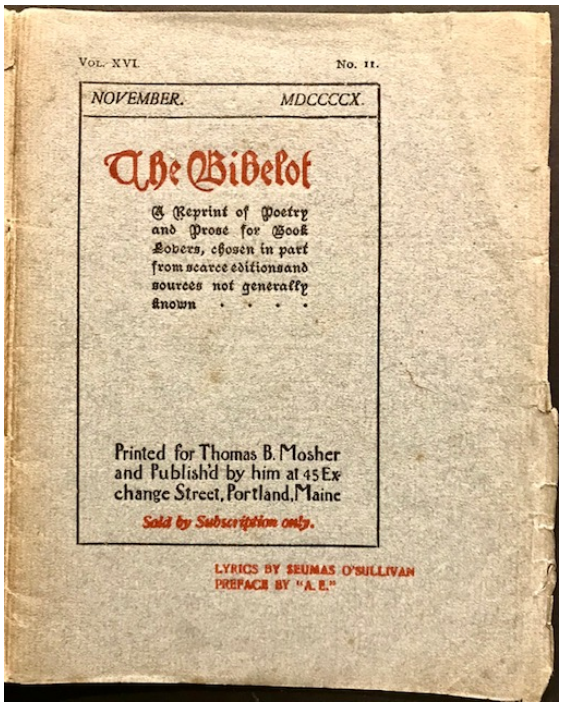
(3) Seumas O'Sullivan's presentation of his *The Bibelot* issue with his hand-written poem.

Before I bought this presentation copy of the Nov. 1910 issue of *The Bibelot* entitled "Lyrics by Seumas O'Sullivan" with a Preface by A.E. (George Russell) from the Irish dealer, Norman Healey, I decided that it was enough to buy the little magazine if for no other reason than it contained a dated poem in O'Sullivan's own hand plus it was inscribed, "*To John Gawsworth / from / Seumas O'Sullivan*". Incidentally, the ink of the inscription is lighter than the ink of the signed/dated poem. That might possibly be explained as an indication that O'Sullivan wrote the poem in several complimentary copies Mosher gave him for distribution, and then afterwards inscribed each copy to whomever and whenever he wanted to present a copy. In this case the inscription to John Gawsworth had to have been much later than the dated handwritten poem in *The Bibelot*.

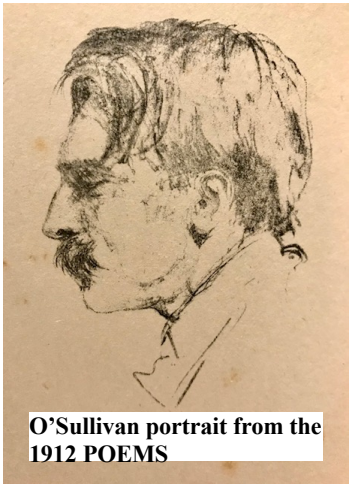
As a matter of record, the eight line poem was indeed published two years later in Seumas O'Sullivan's *POEMS* (Dublin: Maunsel and Company, Ltd, 1912), p. 80 where it is titled and reads:

AN EPILOGUE
Come, heart, and put away your pain,
For it is nothing new, <— handwritten version uses no comma here
That I must face the fight again
With none to friend but you ;
Come on beneath the changing skies
For still the quest is new,
While there is still a sun to rise <— handwritten version: "While there is yet a sun to rise"
An earth to catch the dew.

[signature] <— And of course the handwritten version is signed by Seumas O'Sulivan / Dec. 1910

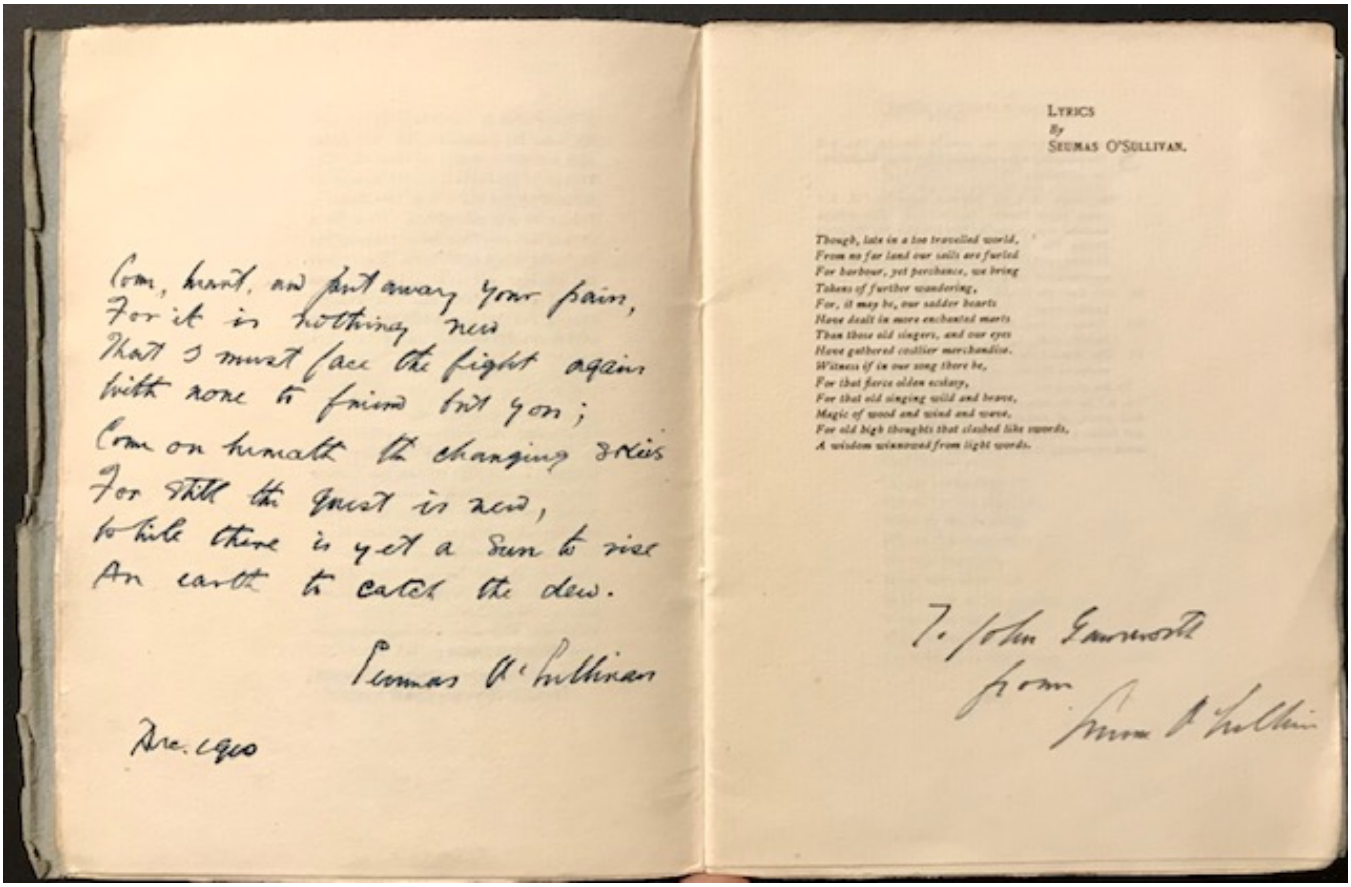

VOL. XVI. No. 11.
NOVEMBER. MDCCCCX.
The Bibelot
A Reprint of Poetry and Prose for Book Lovers, chosen in part from scarce editions and sources not generally known . . . .
Printed for Thomas B. Mosher and Published by him at 45 Exchange Street, Portland, Maine
Sold by Subscription only.
LYRICS BY SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN
PREFACE BY "A. E."

So the handwritten version precedes the published version by two years, although the changes between them are fairly minimal. Even so, I also procured the printed form in the first edition of *POEMS* published in Dublin by Maunsel and Company, Ltd, 1912 with the armorial bookplate of Irish prelate, Vincent Lloyd-Russell.


O'Sullivan portrait from the 1912 POEMS

Seumas O'Sullivan (1879-1958; pseudonym of James Sullivan Starkey) was an Irish poet of a dozen books, numerous articles and introductions, and was the editor of the *The Dublin Magazine.* He was a friend of W. B. Yeats, yet bafflingly suffered the slight of being left out of Yeats's anthology of Irish poets. Often contentious, even with friends, O'Sullivan had a problem with drinking too much, and Yeats is often quoted as saying "the trouble with Seumas is that when he's not drunk, he's sober."

The recipient of this inscribed copy of *The Bibelot* was Terence Ian Fytton Armstrong (1912-1970) the British writer, poet, and anthologist, who wrote under the pseudonym of John Gawsworth. The great Norman Colbeck Collection at the University of British Columbia contains numerous inscribed books by Seumas O'Sullivan to John Gawsworth, one inscribed in 1929, with the larger number from 1937 to 1949. In one of the entries Colebeck noted: "It is clear, on examination, that the author was forced to use for presentation (at this late date) a copy which had earlier contained his bookplate." This was a 1914 work of his that was later inscribed to Gawsworth in 1938. In my estimation, especially given the difference in pen between the *MS* poem and the presentation inscription, this is precisely what happened in this instance with O'Sullivan's appearance in *The Bibelot*: the *MS* poem written in December 1910 and then later inscribed to John Gawsworth.

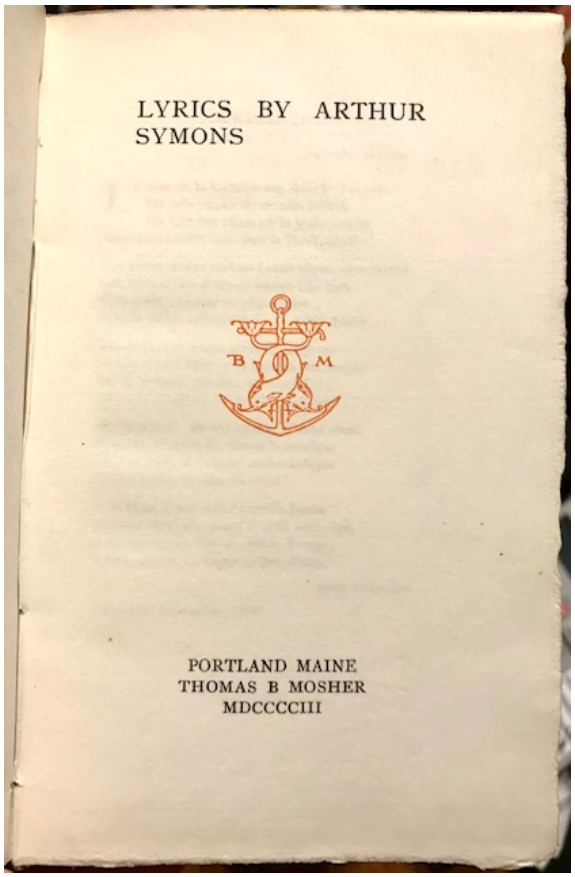


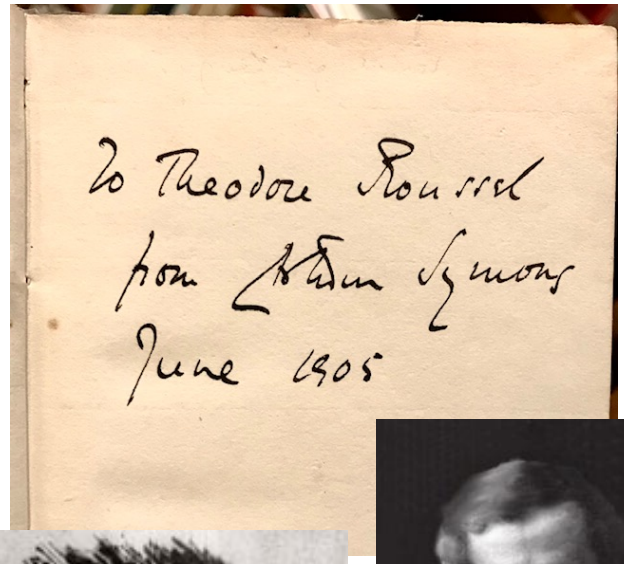
(4) Arthur Symons' *Lyrics*, inscribed by the author to the artist Theodore Roussel

In his Introduction to my bio-bibliography *Thomas Bird Mosher—Pirate Prince of Publishers*, William E Fredeman wrote:

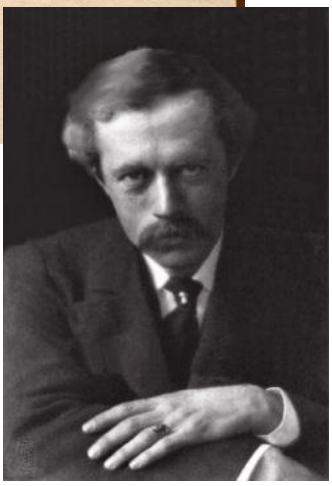
> As a poet, contributor to *The Savoy*, biographer of Beardsley, and the author of *The Symbolist Movement in England* (1898), Arthur Symons was precisely the kind of writer to whom Mosher was attracted. The attraction appears to have been reciprocated, for not only did he readily consent to Mosher's reprinting his writings, he also presented to Mosher a copy of his first book, *An Introduction to the Study of Browning* (1886) with an inscription that overrides the printed dedication to Meredith: the unsent copy he inscribed for Browning with an unpublished quatrain, presumably at the time of the book's initial appearance. He later reinscribed this volume, with an explanation (unquoted here), "to Thomas B. Mosher, printer of beautiful books."

So to obtain any book printed by Mosher over Arthur Symons' name, and signed by Arthur Symons, is a delight, but even more so is an inscribed association copy by Symons. In this case I procured this book from a French dealer. The book? Arthur Symons' *Lyrics*, published by Mosher in 1903, inscribed "To Theodore Roussel / from Arthur Symons / June 1905." Theodore Roussel (1847-1926) was a French born and self-taught English painter in London and life-long friend of James McNeill Whistler who also served as his mentor. Symons also spent time socially with Whistler at dinner, so it is rather easy to see how Roussel and Symons knew of one another. Likewise, Roussel was a very close friend with William Sharp, another inner-circle connection that Symons would have been aware of Roussel. Of course the inscription itself shows that there was a connection between the two men.






Self-portrait by Theodore Roussel


Arthur Symons

(5) *The Growth of Love* from Herman M. Schroeter's library with his Omarian bookplate

Herman Schroeter, a pharmacist in Los Angeles*, was a long time customer of the Mosher Books, which included one of the earliest books printed for Mosher: *The Growth of Love* by Robert Bridges published in 1894. The importance of Schroeter to the Mosher story is that for the longest while he intended to compile a bibliography of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, he being a pioneering collector of *The Rubaiyat*, but the bibliography was never completed. He abandoned this goal in 1914 when Ambrose George Potter took up the project, after corresponding with Schroeter for six years following Schroeter's advertisement in *Notes & Queries*.** Schroeter sent his

bibliographical manuscript to Potter, and Potter later noted in his foreword that Schroeter "generously presented me with the manuscript material he had." Of course he was in contact with Mosher who published a large number of Rubaiyats in his various series, as he accumulated those and other Rubaiyats in expectation of his bibliography.



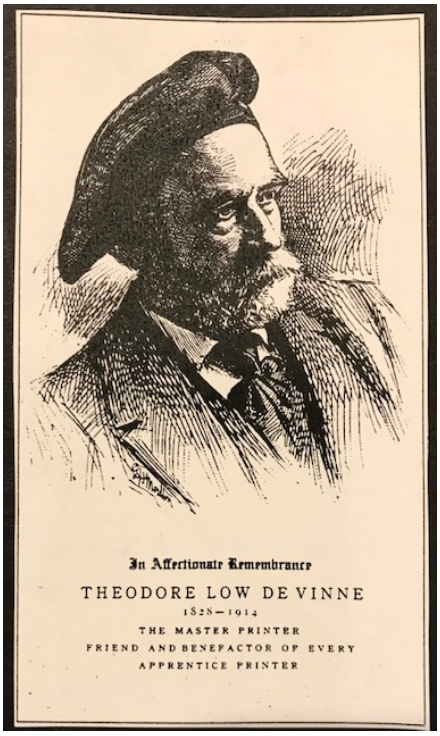
Schroeter's Omarian bookplate was also apparently used for other books in his library, such as this copy of *The Growth of Love*. The bookplate was designed by Arthur Engler and is dated 1913. The motto used is: I sent my soul through the invisible | some letter of that after-life to spell | and bye and bye my soul returned to me | and answered, "I myself am heav'n and hell". with the scene presented being a man writing on a paper whilst sitting at a desk in his library setting with shelves of books beside him. This is surrounded by a ribbon containing the names of various authors involved with *The Rubaiyat*. The plate is signed at the bottom "A. Engler DEL.-SC.-1913.

I basically bought the book for the bookplate which to me seems a bit out of kilter with the subject matter.

* Notice of his successful licentiate with the California State Board of Pharmacy was published in *The Pharmaceutical Era* of November 22, 1906.

** *Notes & Queries*, 10 Series, Oct. 17, 1908, p. 307

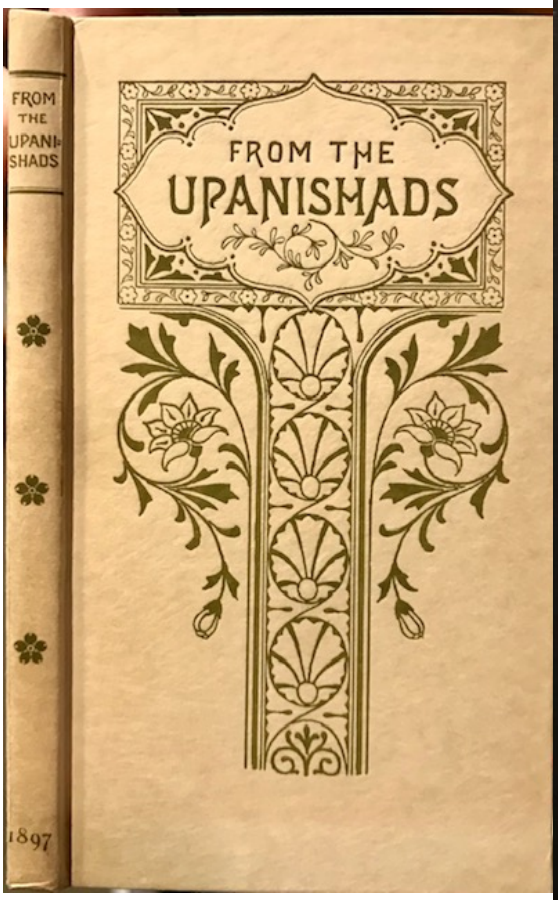
(6) Letter from Theodore L. De Vinne acknowledging Mosher's "Good bit of bookmaking."

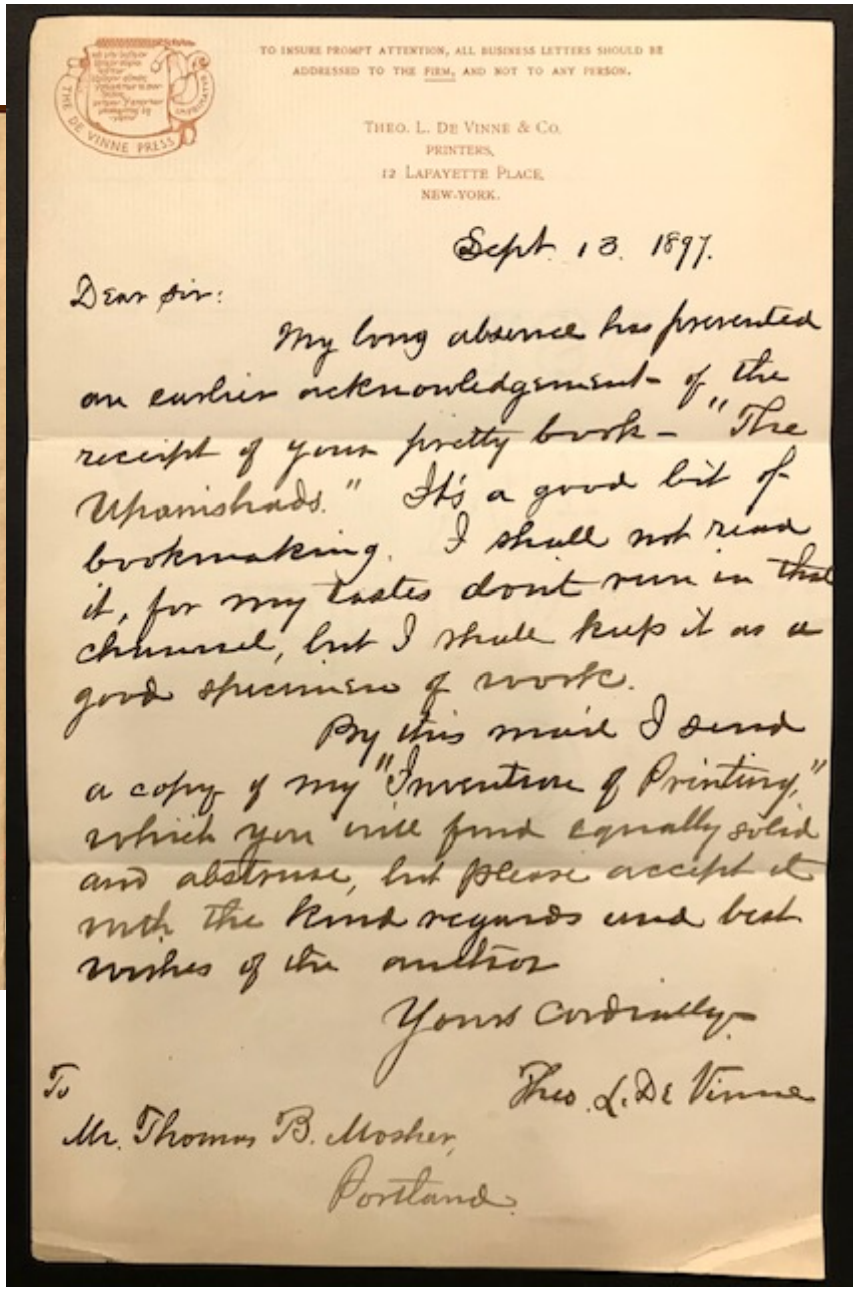


This letter between De Vinne and Mosher was procured at auction in May 2022. This is the third De Vinne letter to enter the collection, the other two being from Dec. 23, 1891 and January 12, 1892. The earliest refers to receiving a copy of Mosher's first book, *Modern Love* (1891) in which De Vinne indicates "I am well pleased with your book. The composition and presswork are well done" and continues in discussing matters related to selling his books, mailing circulars to the members of the Grolier Club, the use of quote marks, and a few remarks on his own *The Invention of Printing*. The second in 1892 acknowledges Mosher's gift of James Thompson's *The City of Dreadful Night* adding "it is a very good bit of book-making" and reciprocates the gift by sending Mosher a copy of his *Columbus Letter*. Apparently there were other exchanges between these two men during this five year interregnum, as might be assumed by the record of this recently purchased letter of September 13, 1897.

In this case De Vinne acknowledges the receipt of "your pretty book- "The Upanishads" which he again notes is "a good bit of bookmaking" but also adds that he will not read it because his "tastes don't run in that channel" but will "keep it as a good specimen of work." By way of exchange, he sends along a

copy of his *Invention of Printing* not remembering that Mosher had already read it as De Vinne commented upon it in the first letter he sent to Mosher On Dec. 23, 1891 (see above). The letter, reproduced in full, is given below:





TO INSURE PROMPT ATTENTION, ALL BUSINESS LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE FIRM, AND NOT TO ANY PERSON.

THEO. L. DE VINNE & CO.
PRINTERS,
12 LAFAYETTE PLACE,
NEW-YORK.

Sept 13. 1897.

Dear Sir:

My long absence has prevented an earlier acknowledgement of the receipt of your pretty book – "The Upanishads." It's a good bit of bookmaking. I shall not read it, for my tastes dont run in that channel, but I shall keep it as a good specimen of work.

By this mail I send a copy of my "Invention of Printing," which you will find equally solid and abstruse, but please accept it with the kind regards and best wishes of the author

Yours Cordially

Theo. L. De Vinne

To
Mr. Thomas B. Mosher,
Portland

(7) Letter by Ray Purrington which includes Mosher's hand-written response below.

In response to a November 23, 1908 letter (with hand-addressed return envelope from Mosher) from Ray Purrington of New Bowdoin, Maine to Thomas Bird Mosher asking if subscribers for *The Bibelot* are allowed to purchase any number of years at the present price, Mosher writes back "*My Dear Sir: / I can only take subscriptions for 1909. / If I live I hope to bring the Bibelot up to 20 or 25 volumes, / but cannot look so far ahead in the matter by taking of taking subscriptions. Yours truly, T B Mosher*" The letter is just a bit of a daily, routine customer / publisher exchange, but the way in which I obtained it was unusual. I was visiting one of my old bookseller haunts, "Carlson & Turner" Books and Book Bindery in Portland, Maine. I amassed a small pile of The Mosher Books at the cash register counter and asked the owner's wife if they had any letters from Mosher. Nope. No letters. After some more hunting and pecking around, I saw a copy of the Hatch bibliography up on a shelf behind the counter. Always being inquisitive, I asked to see it

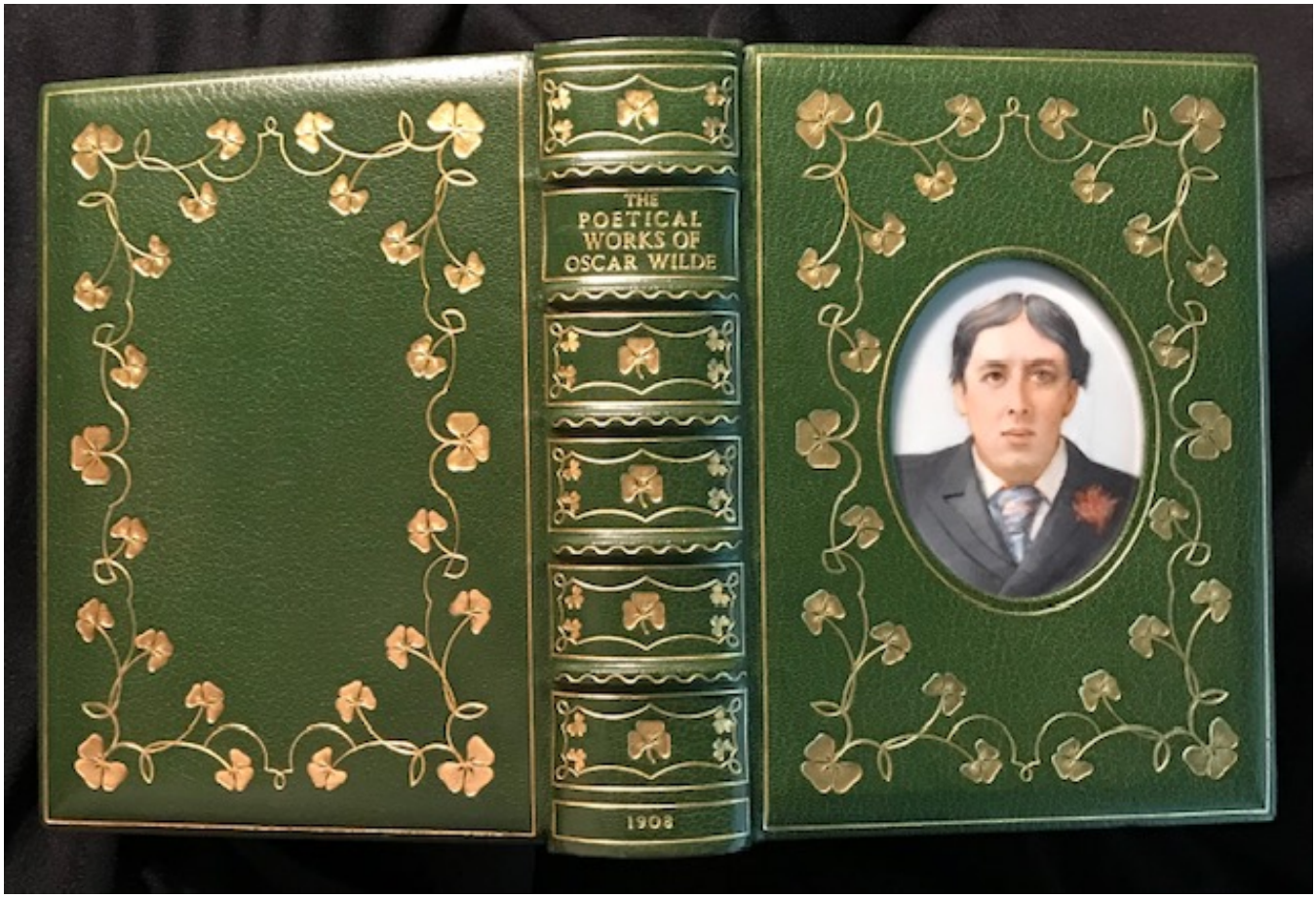
and got it down. It was my old bookseller friend, F. M. O'Brien's copy. He always kept written notes on the inside front endpapers, but I know he also would stick things into the books he owned. Sure enough, there was this letter still in its envelope. I lifted it out and asked the owner's wife if she would ask her husband, Scott, if he would sell the letter separate from the Hatch bibliography and how much. She took it downstairs to the bindery and returned saying Scott said he had no idea it was in the hatch bibliography and that I could have it for free. Now THAT doesn't happen every day, and I happily paid for the other hundred plus dollar pile of Mosher books which were also included some interesting finds including #8 below.

(8) An inscribed copy of the exhibition catalogue:

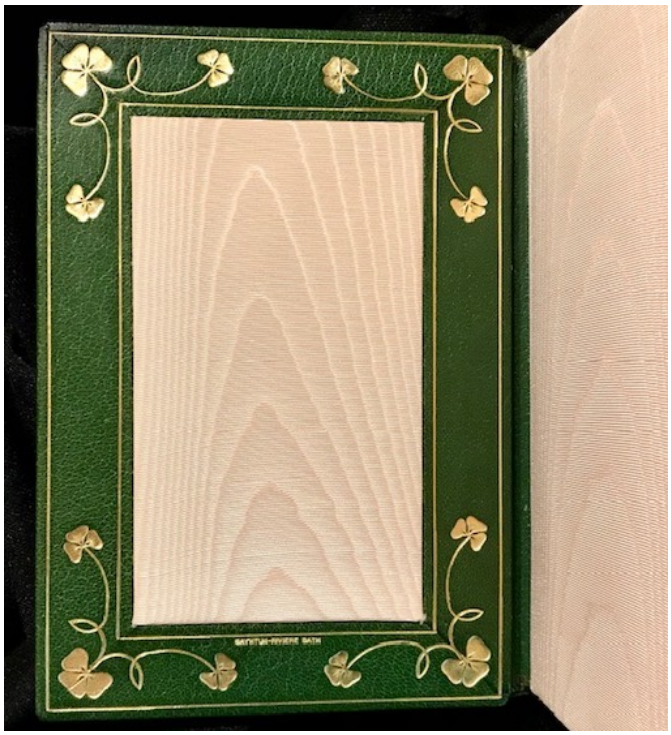
The Mosher catalogue of the Temple exhibition is entitled *Thomas Bird Mosher and the Art of the Book*, (now bearing the bookplate of F. M. O'Brien) co-authored by Jean-François Vilain and myself back in 1992. I sent a copy to the bookseller Francis O'Brien with the following inscription: "Sat., April 25 '92 / To Francis, one of the / all time greats of / Maine booksellers, a man who / has helped me collect the / best of Mosher, and a / fellow bookseller I can truly / call 'friend' / Best wishes / ol' fella, / Phil B." I retrieved this copy. What can I say. I left the bookstore with a smile on my face.

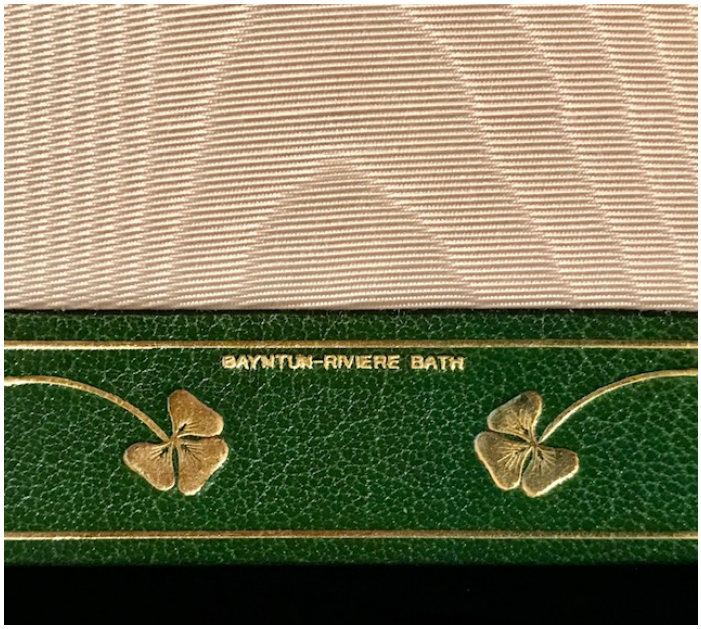
(9) *The Poetical Works of Oscar Wilde* (Mosher, 1908) in a Cosway-styled binding

This star in the bindings portion of the Mosher collection is best pictorially introduced here first:



THE POETICAL WORKS OF OSCAR WILDE. Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher, 1908. Cosway-styled binding signed BAYNTUN-RIVIERE BATH. This is the first Cosway-styled binding on a Mosher imprint to enter the Bishop Collection. The conjoined bindery of Bayntun-Riviere in Bath has been in operation since 1939. The first popular production of Cosway bindings was made around 1901-02 by Sotherans. This style of binding with a hand-painted miniature portrait under glass was named after the 18th Century portrait miniaturist, Richard Cosway. They were also produced by Sangorski & Sutcliffe, Morrell, and Rivière & Son. When Rivière merged with Bayntun this artful tradition was continued. According to the firm's owner Edward Bayntun Coward, the painting of Wilde may be by Joy Stanley Ricketts who was their miniaturist.





White moiré watered silk doublures and endpapers.

To be perfectly honest, I never expected to see, much less own, a Mosher book in a Cosway binding, so you can imagine my delight in coming across this one with an Oscar Wilde portrait on the collected poetry of one of Mosher's favorite authors. It's quite sumptuous and the binding is bright green with shamrock tools paying honor to the Emerald Isle's poet/author. The book was purchased from Matthew Raptis of Raptis Rare Books of Palm Beach, Florida.

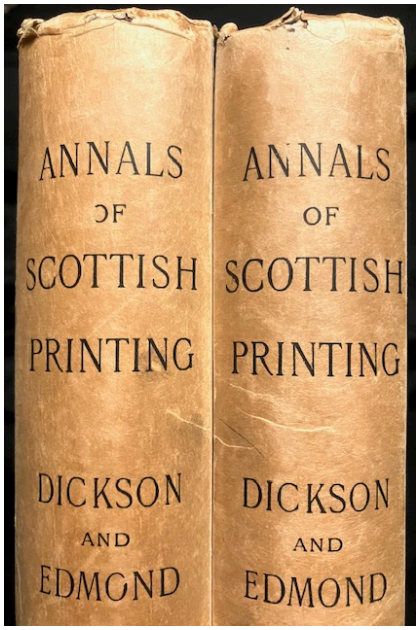
With this binding acquisition there are now four specially bound copies of *The Poetical Works of Oscar Wilde* in the collection, including (a) an exhibition binding by Miss Ada M. Garretson, (b) a binding done for Hatchards, most likely by Sangorski & Sutcliff) and owned by Princess Hatzfelt, (c) an unattributed full tooled binding. These are added to two copies of the original gilt-decorated blue Mosher bindings—both in dust-jacket—in very fine condition, and lastly, copy No. 12 of 25 printed on Japan vellum paper and bound in Japan vellum gilt-decorated boards. In the collection there are also several bindings on Oscar Wilde's *Poems* (1903) and *Intentions* (1904) and a whole host of bindings on smaller Oscar Wilde/Mosher books from the Miscellaneous Series, the Brocade Series, and the Ideal Series of Little Masterpieces.

(10) Lovely copy of Oscar Wilde's *The Young King and Other Tales*. Mosher, 1922.

Funny thing, in my immense collection of the Mosher imprints there remained this book missing from the line-up. To be sure, I had the Japan vellum edition, but for some strange reason I didn't have the

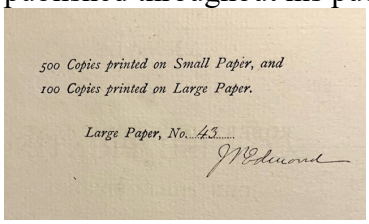
regular Van Gelder edition. While assembling a collection of Oscar Wilde titles as a gift to a prominent Oscar Wilde collector in England, I came across the Van Gelder edition of *The Young King* in printed dust jacket and containing the gift card of Mr. and Mrs. Woods who presented this copy privately printed by the Mosher Press to Major & Mrs. Robert Stevenson. This copy was coincidentally located in England, and so I ordered the book which is now part of the Mosher Collection. As I said, I also had the Japan velum edition, and part of my gift box of Oscar Wilde titles sent to England included another copy of the Japan vellum printing. So maybe there was a good karma in sending the box, because now the hole in my collection has been filled with a copy *sent from England*.

(11) *Annals of Scottish Printing* (1890) with Mosher's bookplate. I've known about this two-volume, limited large paper set of Dickson and Edmund's *Annals of Scottish Printing from the Introduction of the Art in 1507 to the Beginning of the Seventeenth Century* (1890) since it appeared at Swann Auction Galleries on Nov. 8, 2007. It sold for $390. I bid on it but lost out to Bob Fleck of Oak Knoll Books. Ever since this particular set has appeared for sale on listings ranging anywhere from $850 to $1,063 depending on what bookselling site you accessed it's listing:



> **Dickson, Robert and John Philip Edmond**
> **ANNALS OF SCOTTISH PRINTING FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ART IN 1507 TO THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**
> Cambridge: Macmillan & Bowes, 1890. original creme colored paper spine with light green paper covers. 4to. original creme colored paper spine with light green paper covers. xv, 272; (iv), 273-530 pages. 2 volumes. Limited to 600 numbered copies signed by Edmond, of which this is one of the 100 large paper copies bound thus. Includes both a history and bibliographical descriptions of 333 books. Illustrated. Note that the large paper copies have a separate half-title and title page for the second volume. The bookplate of Thomas B. Mosher is included in each volume. Light soiling on covers; internally a very fine, unopened copy.

I regretted not having bought it back in 2007 and often came across it from time to time over the past fifteen years, but I never placed an order for it although I often entertained the notion that I should at least make an offer. Nevertheless, I remained reluctant since I reasoned that it had no particular direct connection to the books Mosher published throughout his publishing career from 1891-1923. Still, it was a large paper copy, signed by J. P. Edmond, and from Mosher's private home library which appeared in the second auction of his library (Oct. 1948; entry 476). But there was one unmistakable connection: Mosher was of Scottish ancestry, and so a book on Scottish printing from the library of this American publisher was of more than passing interest considering the bigger picture. The log jam over to purchase/not to purchase was finally broken when I received notification on the 2022 "Black Friday/Cyber Monday Sale" by Oak Knoll Books & Press with a selection of books 30-50% off. Guess what was among the 50% off titles? So that made my mind up and I ordered it for about the same price I would have paid in 2007. Amazing. It will be added to the 550 or so books from Mosher's library in the collection here at the Bishopric of Lancaster County.

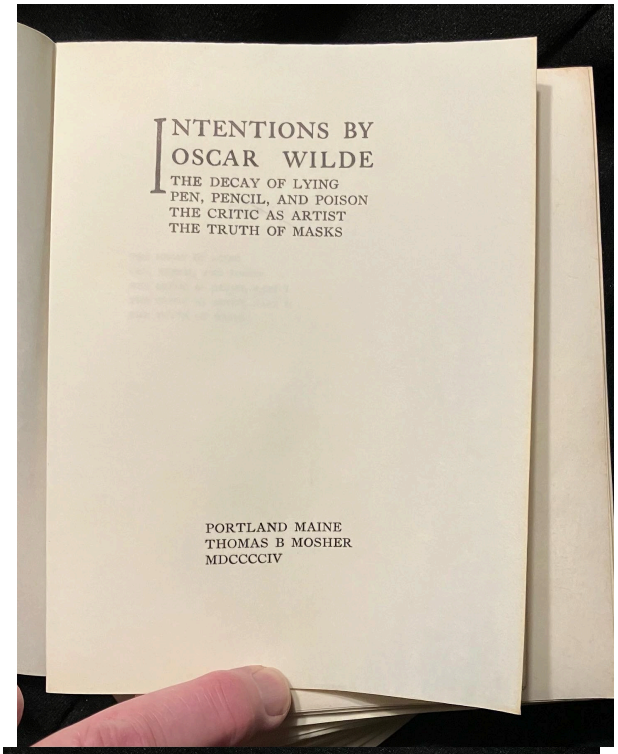

500 Copies printed on Small Paper, and
100 Copies printed on Large Paper.

Large Paper, No. 43

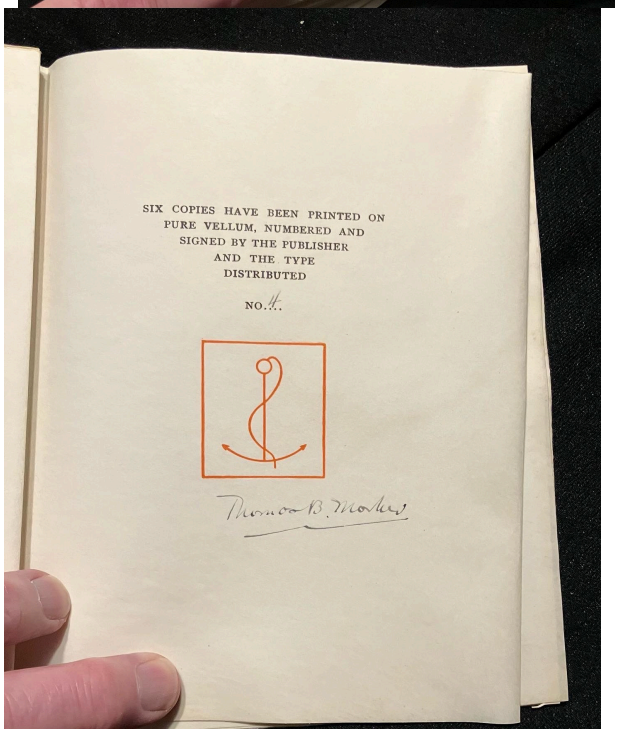
12) Oscar Wilde's *Intentions* (Mosher, 1904), one of six copies printed on Roman vellum. Copy #4 of 6 printed on Roman vellum, signed by Mosher. In loose folded sheets, as issued. This acquisition marks the 43rd Mosher book printed on vellum in the Bishop Collection. Other copies recorded: #3 is in a private collection, #5 was offered at a British auction in 2010 (whereabouts unknown), and copy #2 in binding by the Club Bindery from the W. H. Poor library is now at the Huntington Library. There are no records for copies #1 and #6 so they are are presently unknown. This is the first vellum book in the collection housed in

the publisher's cabinet-style case. I have seen just two others housing vellum sheets on Mosher's Quarto Series titles while visiting collections across the country, but this is the first to enter the Bishop Collection. So pleased to have it, and on an Oscar Wilde title nonetheless.



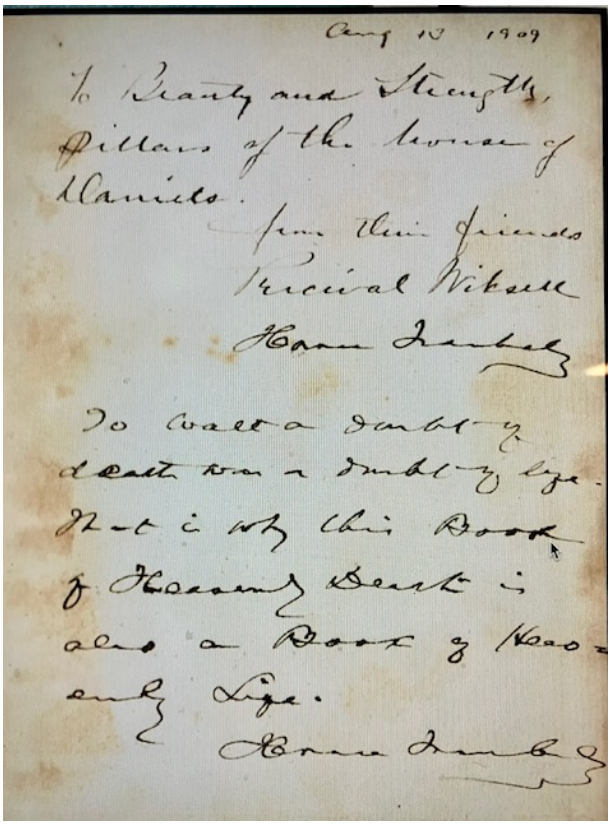






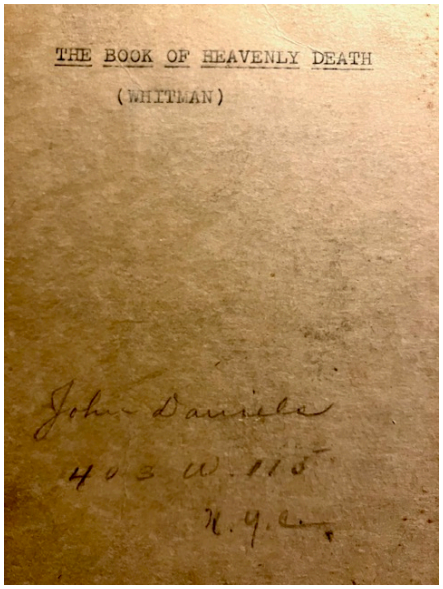
Along with this book, several others were purchased from the same source in Maine, all part of an intrigue for me in that they seemed to suggest that the original collector of these was an individual close to the Mosher Books publisher, or to his erstwhile assistant, Flora MacDonald Lamb. One of the books was inscribed to “Oliver” which I take it to be Oliver Sheean who lived in Maine and assisted the Mosher office in doing various chores, packing books, pick up and delivery of material, etc. He became even more of a helper after Mosher died on August 31, 1923. Toward the very end of The Mosher Books in Portland, ME in 1941when it was sold to the Williams Book Store in Boston, Sheean gathered more and more material like

the correspondence of a number of Mosher's authors which Sheean somehow got ahold of and eventually gifted over a thousand letters to Harvard University. A collection of the Mosher Books and more manuscript material and family items assembled by Sheean and his close partner was eventually sold to the Special Collection at Arizona State University. It could very well be that the above vellum printing and several other limited editions on Japan vellum were remnants that were left in that estate. It's not unusual to have Japan vellum copies, but to have a number of them as copy number one, or the final copy of limited print runs, suggest someone having had access to the material. Other limited editions acquired for the Bishop Collection (all in very remarkable condition), include *The Germ* (1898, copy # 25 of 25 on Japan vellum), *Plato's Apology of Socrates and Crito with Part of His Phaedo* (1910, copy #1 of 25 on Japan vellum) as translated by Benjamin Jowett, Gilbert Murray's *Andromache: A Play in Three Acts* (1913, copy #1 on Japan vellum), Oscar Wilde's *Lecture on the English Renaissance* (1905, copy #4 of 50 on Japan vellum), Simeon Solomon's *A vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* (1909, copy #1 of 50 printed on Japan vellum), Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1920, copy #50 0f 50 printed on Japan vellum) and a number of the other copies of The Mosher Books. It just strikes me as peculiar that this stash of The Mosher Books should come with such limited printings with first of last numbers on the Japan vellum print run. I may be totally wrong about my assumptions, but in my 30+ years of experience in collecting these Mosher books, I have very infrequently come across a stash with so may of the #1's in the mix.



(13) Copy of Walt Whitman's *The Book of Heavenly Death* (1907) inscribed and signed on August 13, 1909 by two of Whitman's disciples: Horace Traubel and Percival Wiksell. The book's hand-made covering also includes the signature and address of recipient John Daniels on the added wrapper (see picture below). One of 500 copies printed on hand-made Van Gelder paper of this the second edition. The first inscription, "*To Beauty and Strength, / pillars of the house of Daniels / from their friends / Percival Wiksell / Horace Traubel*" is written and signed in Percival Wiksell's hand, and then was counter-signed by Whitman biographer and the book's editor, Horace Traubel. Below the first inscription is a second, slightly longer one written and signed only by Horace Traubel. The inscription reads:

> *To Walt a doubt of / death was a doubt of life. / That is why this Book / of Heavenly Death is / also a Book of Heav- / enly Life. / Horace Traubel.*



This assertion "*To Walt a doubt of death was a doubt of life*" is pulled directly from Traubel's preface to the book on p. *xxi*: "To Whitman a doubt of death was a doubt of life. He could not see life rounded without death to assist it. Nor could he see death rounded without life to assist it" and goes on to further explicate what Whitman meant which includes the selected writings by Whitman on death which comprise the book itself.

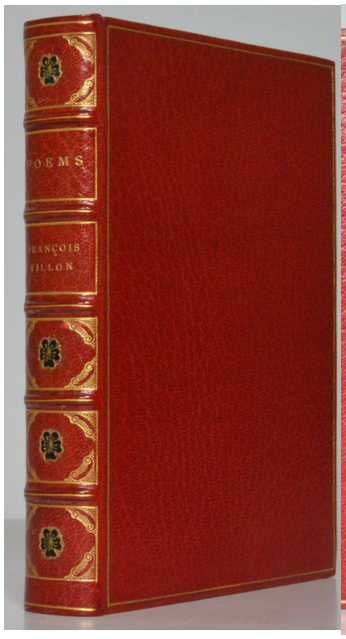
Background of the two signers of these inscriptions puts them right at center focus of Whitman's associates. Horace Traubel (1858-1919) was a poet, critic, essayist, publisher of the journal *The Conservator*, and close friend and biographer of Walt Whitman. He is best known for his apostolic friendship with Walt Whitman chronicled in the nine-volume biography about the poet, *'With Walt Whitman in Camden*, a work of

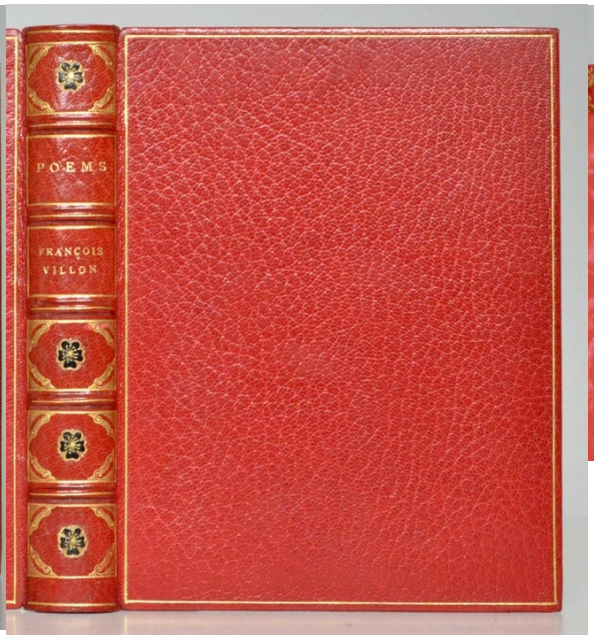
nearly two million words compiled over four years of daily conversations with Whitman. He also founded the Walt Whitman Fellowship International in 1894 serving as its secretary-treasurer until 1918, and worked indefatigably to preserve, memorialize, and bring Walt Whitman literary voice to a larger audience. Most of Traubel's correspondence is now at the Library of Congress.

The Boston dentist and Whitman follower, Gustave Percival Wiksell (1887-1939) was president of the Walt Whitman Fellowship International from 1903 until 1919. So devoted was this Whitman disciple that he had a photo taken which replicated the famed pose of Whitman in the Samuel Hollyer engraving used as the frontispiece illustration for the 1855 & 1856 editions of Whitman's masterwork, *Leaves of Grass*. Wiksell's papers are now in the Library of Congress and he maintained a close association with Horace Traubel, delivering his eulogy at his 1919 funeral. Some Traubel scholars lay out evidence that Wiksell and Traubel were in fact more than good friends.

The publisher, Thomas Bird Mosher, was friend to both of these gentlemen and fellow member of the Walt Whitman Fellowship group. The Bishop Collection has a small but revealing archive of Mosher-Wiksell material from the Wiksell family, as well as some materials that passed between Traubel and Mosher. One of the publishing outcomes was this *The Book of Heavenly Death* (1905; 1907 sec. ed.) by Walt Whitman, compiling 128 pertinent selections from *Leaves of Grass* headed by Traubel's preface. Traubel also supplied a foreword to the beautifully printed 1912 *Memories of President Lincoln* by Walt Whitman which previously also appeared in *The Bibelot* (August 1904), in Mosher's Miscellaneous Series in 1904, and in the Lyric Garland Series of 1906 (second ed. in 1912). The *tour de force*, however, was Mosher who co-published (along with William F. Gable) the first facsimile of Whitman's 1855 *Leaves of Grass* which even replicated both the wrappers of some copies, and the cloth binding of others. This came out in 1919 (sec. ed 1920). Inside there is a dedicatory memorial tribute to Horace Traubel who regrettably died before this book was published, and which affixes the importance of Traubel to Mosher and to the wider Whitman fellowship.

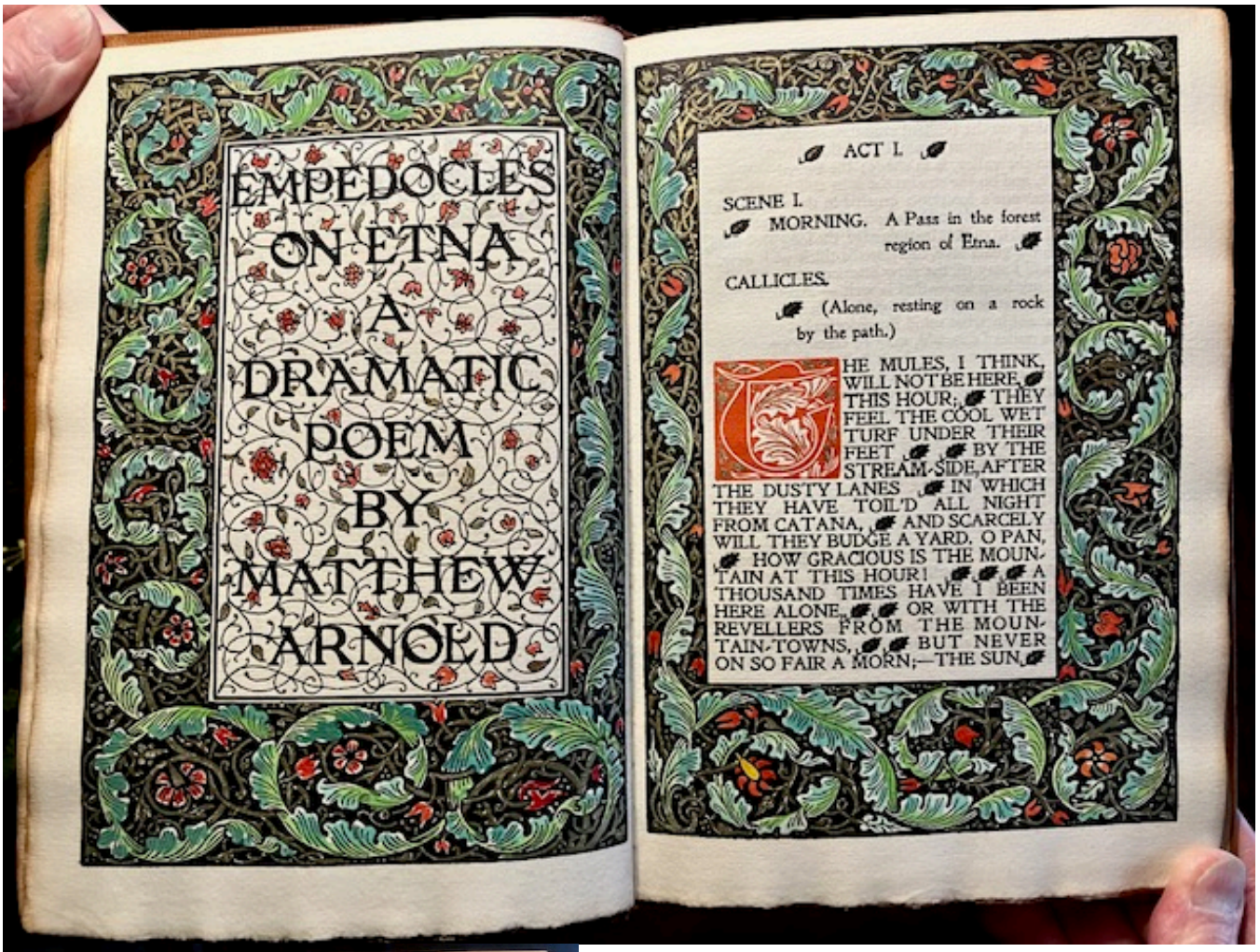
(14) Binding on *The Poems of Villon* (1916) & hand-illuminated copy of *Empedocles on Etna* (1900)





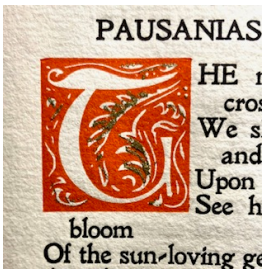


Simple yet lovely binding acquired from England. Unsigned and probably of English origin, around 1930-40.





This is an amateur color and gold illuminated copy of Matthew Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna* published by Mosher in 1900. The added illumination was probably done later. The large red printed capital "A" beginning Act II only uses gold to highlight some of its areas (also see the capital "T" below). The illumination is itself unsigned The binding carries the letters CARNEM at the foot of the spine. This then the binder? The illuminator? Both?





Philip R. Bishop
March 2023