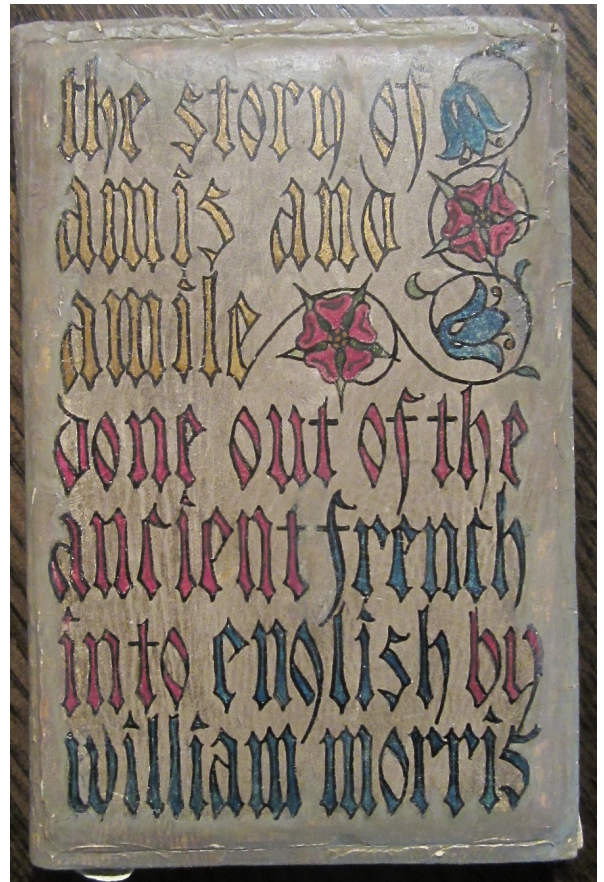


From Charles Frederick Eaton's "The Arts & Crafts" Shop

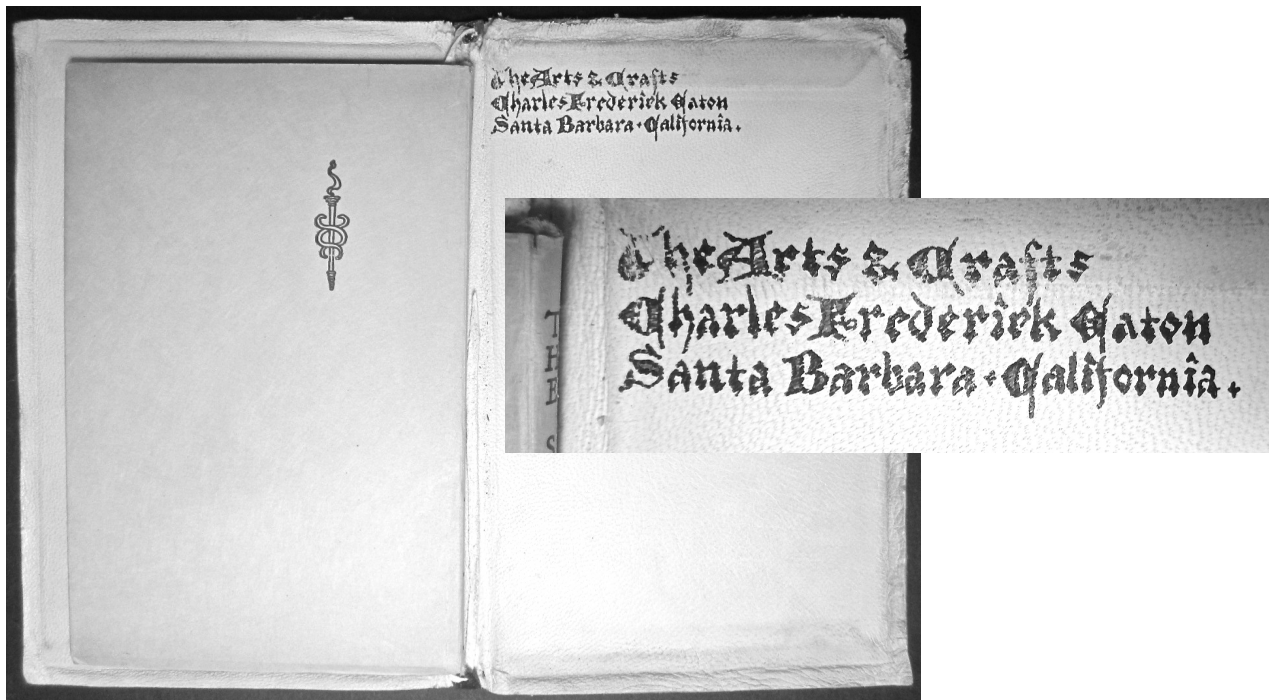
Although Charles Frederick Eaton (1843-1930) studied architecture, landscaping and painting, he was by trade a landscape architect. He also became well known for his work as a designer heading a group of associate crafts workers in what was called the "The Arts & Crafts" shop in Santa Barbara, California. Gustav Stickley called Eaton's own productions "peculiar objects of household decoration" in his article on "Nature and Art in California" (*The Craftsman*, July 1904, p. 388) and his work appears in exhibitions such as the Arts & Crafts Exhibition at Minneapolis in 1903, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904, and the Yukon-Alaska-Pacific Exposition of Seattle in 1909. Eaton's shop handled, among other things, small cabinets, trays, lamps, screens, illuminated work, leatherwork (framed quotes, illuminated books), book bindings and metal work. One of the craftsmen represented at the "Arts & Crafts" was Robert Wilson Hyde (1875-1930) who also provided his hand-scripted and illuminated work in San Francisco. As a bookseller I've handled a couple framed mottos by Robert Wilson Hyde, but I never, ever found any Mosher book sporting Hyde's work, that is until now.

As just one of his fourteen series, Mosher produced small volumes printed on Japan vellum paper called the Brocade Series which was so named for the brocade paper covering the slipcases of these little books measuring approximately 5 ¼" x 3 ½" outside of their slipcases. Authors such as Richard Jefferies, Walter Pater, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde. et. al., all found their way into this series. In particular, Mosher also printed the Old French and Old English romances by William Morris. One of the titles was *The Story of Amis & Amile Done out of the Ancient French into English* by William Morris which first found appearance by Mosher in 1896 and which ran through five more editions (printings) up to 1909. One of these "editions" of 1898 (fourth edition; Bishop 384.3) found its way to California where Robert Wilson Hyde applied his hand-scripted handiwork to a leather cover exactly reproducing Mosher's complete title. The first six words are in gold, while "done out of the ancient," "into" and "by" are in red, while the words "french" "english" and "william morris" are all in blue, with all letters being outlined in black. The flowers are red or blue with gold highlights. The background behind the lettering is gray. The "binding" provides what one could call a thick covering for the little Mosher volume which was fastened inside by a tether chord affixed at top and bottom to small metal grommets. The little Brocade book fits perfectly in its enclosure. Inside the back cover, on the upper left, is the calligraphed statement, also by Hyde, reading:



The Arts & Crafts
Charles Frederick Eaton
Santa Barbara □ California.

Each initial capital letter of the maker's mark is in either red or blue. Below is a photographic portrayal of how the Mosher books fits into its cover:



Brocade book opened to the back cover with close up insert of the wording

At first I thought that might signify that the binding and its calligraphy was done by Charles Frederic Eaton, but in investigating other works clearly done by Robert Wilson Hyde for the Arts & Crafts, some of which changed their style, I found that they were “signed” in the same manner. In *The Arts & Crafts Movement of California: Living the Good Life* (The Oakland Museum, 1993), Leslie Green Bowman notes that with regard to books “Eaton was assisted with his designs by Robert Wilson Hyde, who also did all the book illumination.” (p. 188)

This little book goes into the sub-collection of hand-illuminated, extra illustrated, or painted bindings and books of which there are at least 31 such examples in this category including signed work by Marie Hoke, William Cushing Bamburgh, Clara Chipman Newton, Edwin M. Scribner, Giulio Giannini, and Marianne Jelinek.

Philip R. Bishop
6 August 2015