

A few more acquisitions

The following items were also entered into the collection on the dates specified below:

March 4-5 – The Washington Book Fair was outstanding. In another essay I'll give details about what happened to turn out to be one of my most important acquisitions made since I've been collecting books from the Mosher Press. However, I didn't want that to eclipse two small yet meaningful events aside from my mega-purchase, I want to record the kindness of two of my fellow book dealers: Frank Klein of The Bookseller, Inc. (Akron, OH) and Paul Collinge of Heartwood Books (Charlottesville, VA).

The week before the show Frank Klein contacted me and asked if I'd have any interest in a later edition of Shelley's *Adonais* from Mosher's library. "Of course," I replied, but somehow I didn't even take the time to ask which later edition. Mosher owned several. As we were setting up at the show Frank pulled out a little blue stiff-board copy of Shelley's *Adonais*. Faithfully reprinted from the edition of 1821. London: Methuen & Co., 1904 and put it into my hands. I paused to take a look at it and asked, "How much?" Frank motioned sideways with his hand saying something like, "It's yours. I don't want anything for it. I found it a while ago and had meant to send it to you, but since you were setting up here in Washington I just brought it along. Add it to your collection." I was stunned. This happens very few times in one's book collecting career, but this was one instance more to add to the small list of those to whom I am obliged. So here I publically acknowledge his kindness.

Then during the show I was in the booth of Heartwood Books and Paul Collinge asked me if I'd have any interest in a letter in which someone just mentions being at the sale of Mosher's library. I indicated I would and the matter sort of dropped at that. A week after the book show I got an envelope from Heartwood Books with a handwritten letter of March 22, 1948 inside from Olivia Bowditch (1917-1992) of Portland, Maine to one Harold Bowditch (a relative? husband?) in which she adds toward the end of the letter, "The Mosher Auction is May 3rd & 4th in the Parke Bernet Galleries—I shall go on to it." True, it isn't much, but it does mention something about Mosher's library sale so I was glad to receive it. I called Paul and was again told it was sent gratis. How is it that I should be on their "be kind" lists? And again I publically thank yet another dealer for his kindness. But wait, there's a third! No calls, no previous warning, just a receipt for eleven books bought of Thomas B. Mosher, publisher. This came from fellow bookseller, Michael R. Thompson of Los Angeles, CA with a penned note on his business card, "With

compliments.” Again, how very nice and how totally unexpected. So, thanks go out to all three gentlemen.

March 15, 2001 – Just before the Caxton Club’s March 18 “Book-Launch Party” at the Newberry Library, I received my author’s copy of *Other People’s Books: Association Copies and the Stories They Tell*. How very nicely illustrated, and how very pleased I am to have been selected as one of its 52 contributors. I couldn’t make the festivities, but being reasonably pleased with what I held in my hands, I felt an unusual stir of connectedness with the attendees just prior to the event, so much so that the day before I sent the following email to Kim Coventry, Co-chair of the Publications Committee. I’m sure it never got read to the dinner guests, nor distributed to any of the other members of the publications committee, but these were my sentiments nonetheless:

As one of the 52 authors in *Other People's Books* I'm gratified that my essay "From My Hands to Yours: Uncovering the Tynan-Wyndham Connection" has joined the ranks of so many other fine essays in what is a spectacular Caxton Club publication. I bid you all a hearty welcome and though not physically present, I'm with you there in spirit. On March 5th I acquired what ranks as one of my finest association copies which, if I had it in my hands before submitting my Tynan essay, you would have instead been reading about the Mosher Press book *The Land of Heart's Desire* inscribed by its author William Butler Yeats with a complete poem written in his holograph, accompanied by a 2 1/2-page letter from Lily Yeats which recorded her brother's views on Mosher remarking "that he wished honest publishers had such Good Taste..." How's that for a backhanded compliment? The thrill of this acquisition will carry me for some time to come, as will its payment plan. I thought it might be nice to personally commemorate the Caxton Club's new book in this small way by presenting these good cheers showing that "collecting association copies lives on" even as we speak. Congratulations on a fine book, a wonderful symposium, and on a job well done by all.

April 26, 2011 – Received Arsene Yergath’s *The Weaver by the Nile*. Translated by Edna Worthley Underwood (Portland, ME: The Mosher Press, 1936. Inscribed on the front flyleaf by Laila Kempton – *In memory of a happy summer. Edna Worthley Underwood*. Normally I wouldn’t purchase this post-Mosher book, especially since I already have a copy, but the seller, John Kuenzig of Kuenzig Books, was so kind in previously sending me a Mosher book as a gift (oh my heavens, yet another!), and so I didn’t want to refuse this book, especially since he wasn’t really asking that much for it.

May 9, 2011 - I just received T. B. Mosher's copy of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London, NY and Melbourne: Ward Lock & Bowden Limited, n.d. [1895]. Mason 330 (with 8-page catalogue in the rear). This is apparently the copy from which Mosher took the text of Chapter XI for his May 1914 issue of *The Bibelot* (pp. 169-208) as

it bears his editorial marks in pencil. This was the last of a small shelf of Oscar Wilde titles from Mosher's library which I bought over the years from a single Georgia ABAA bookman—Frank Walsh of Atlanta's Yesteryear Book Shop. Several years ago, after I purchased from him a number of these books from Mosher's library and Frank indicated that he thought there was still one more. For the last six or seven years I've been leaving little email messages with him just as a reminder. "Don't forget me Frank..." "Anything on that missing Wilde book?" "Did that Oscar Wilde title ever come to the surface?" Nothing happened. Then unexpectedly an email came from another bookseller who apparently was helping Frank with selling some of his books. I got a little noted from Frank's fellow Atlanta dealer, Cliff Graubart of the Old New York Book Shop saying that he "came across a book from Mosher's library with his bookplate. It belongs to Frank Walsh of Yesteryear Book Shop. He told me that he had mentioned it to you years ago but then couldn't find it. He asked me to requote it to you." I returned the email with the following message:

Wow... didn't see this one coming. God bless Frank Walsh--with a smattering of Irish good luck to you too for being so kind as to quote it. Just last week I was going to send him yet another reminder about whenever/ if ever he comes across that book to let me know. Yes, indeed I'll take the book. I bought a number of Oscar Wilde books with Mosher's bookplate from Frank of Yesteryear Book Shop and I'll add this one to the grouping. This is wonderful especially after what?-- six or seven years. I will be putting a check into the mail tomorrow, May 1st, as instructed. Happy May Day, and...
Best wishes,

Of course what neither Frank nor Cliff indicated was that the book carried Mosher's editorial marks, so that finding capped off what was a wonderful stash of Oscar Wilde titles from Mosher's library.

May 9 – I also received a presentation copy of the second edition of Robert L. M. Coupe's book on *Illustrated Editions of the Works of William Morris in English*. Burnaby, BC (Canada): Lonsdale and Young, 2011. It's limited to 250 copies of which 230 are for sale. Mine is copy No. 8 of 20 numbered copies which Coupe inscribed: "To Philip Bishop of Mosher Books. With grateful thanks for the contact with O'Kane Conwell and the resulting biography of Helen Marguerite O'Kane. Robert Coupe / April 27, 2011." He also indicated on p. *xiv* of the Acknowledgements:

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Philip Bishop of Mosher Books for putting me in contact with James O'Kane Conwell Jr., who wrote a vivid account of his grandmother, Helen Marguerite O'Kane. Without his help virtually no information about her would have been available, and my deepest thanks go to him. Philip Bishop has also provided me with ongoing support and encouragement in general, and specifically in putting me in contact with Dr. Terence Day of Okanagan College, Kelowna, British

Columbia; Dr. Kurt Bodling of the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Mr. Steven Beare of Wilmington, Delaware. These three individuals provided much of the information about the artist John Gretzer in the biographical sketch in this book.

Did you see the name of Steven Beare in the above? So two Delaware Bibliophiles figured into the research behind this book. It was pleasant to read these acknowledgments and Dr. Coupe's kind words.

May 10, 2011 – Received from Roger Thomas & Jacquie Aucott of Leicestershire, England: Hay, John. *In Praise of Omar* (Mosher, 1898) inscribed by “JWG to Violet V Bouchier / June 11, 1898” (Violet Bouchier [1867-1942] was the British actress formerly known as Violet Vanbrugh which was her stage surname). Her acting career spanned more than 50 years.

June 7, 2011 – Received a copy of A. C. Swinburne's *A Year's Letters* (Mosher, 1901) in a lovely high quality full crushed brown morocco binding by the Zaehnsdorf firm; rounded and heavily gilt decorated spine and gilt triple-ruled covers; gilt inner dentelles; top page edges gilt; lovely marbled endpapers. I have never encountered marbled endpapers like this. They are of five colors: two tones of mauve, gold-sprinkled tan, with large purple four-leaf clovers roughly outlined in yellow. Very unusual indeed and I find no reference to this design in my resources on marbled papers.

The book's provenance is also of interest. It was owned by Charles Watt Hobbs and carries his circular monogram bookplate signed and dated “JV 1910.” Hobbs was a stockbroker who worked with his father, Mr. Colin Hobbs, in the Liverpool firm of Hobbs Brothers. As a bachelor, he lived with his brother at Tower Lea, Crosby Road North, Waterloo Park which is in the West Derby area of Liverpool.

June 9, 2011 – Received a copy of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Will O' the Mill* (Mosher, 1911) from the Vest Pocket Series, housed in leather lined slipcase. Binding blind-tooled in brown goatskin; binder's stamp at lower inside front cover THE OAKWOOD BINDERS and with the binders' ticket at the center of the last free flyleaf. Top edge gilt, others untrimmed. Covers are ruled in blind-stamp, double fillet with corner circles. Spine with two raised bands and title with geometric bee design at foot. Leather treated with "our special green antiquing pigment" to show designs and lettering (from an Oakwood Binders catalogue circa 1913). Inner dentelles with green silk central panels. Signed OAKWOOD BINDERS at bottom of rear inner cover. Paper binders tag on a rear blank reads "The Oakwood Binders, Artistic Book Binders, Pittsfield, Massachusetts." Altogether a pleasing binding from the Oakwood Binders.

In 1909 Peter Franck and Sterling Lord met at the Roycroft Shop as two young binders working under master binder, Louis Kinder. In 1911 Sterling Lord went to the Caxton Printers in Pittsfield, MA, and he successfully persuaded Peter Franck to join him a year later. Following a disastrous fire at the Caxton Printers firm, the two binders jointly bought the company and set up their own Oakwood Binders. They also sold Rookwood, Newcomb, and Paul Revere pottery as well as other fine Arts & Crafts products. Frank and Lord partnered until the end of the Great War when they sold their company to the Canaan Press. (*Guild of Book Workers Journal*. Volume III, 1964). Peter Franck went on to establish his own bindery and became Dard Hunter's primary binder.

The circa 1913 catalogue of "The Oakwood Binders" by Sterling Lord and Peter Frank, craftsmen, devotes the entire tenth page to the Mosher "Classics – Vest Pocket Size" indicating "perhaps of all the books we bind we have nothing to compare for appropriateness and individuality as gifts with the delightful little Classics printed by Thomas Mosher... Bound by hand in natural goatskin, tooled after our own design in blind and stained with our special antique stain." The page goes on to list twenty-five of the Mosher book titles they have bound in similar style, and indicating "Price per volume, with library case, \$4.00." One of these volumes and its library case (leather-mouth slipcase) is pictured at the head of the page.

As a side note, I bought this book for about one twentieth the price of a similar binding on a Vest Pocket Mosher book advertised on the Internet, and that copy didn't have the slipcase. So if one knows their subject and persists in trolling the books-for-sale sites, one can sometimes do extremely well.

June 15, 2011 – Received a copy of the 1897 Mosher catalogue in gray wraps with only the title/date printed and no other embellishment (most copies appear in an elaborate cover designed by Frank Rathbun). While doing research for my Mosher Press bibliography --and over twenty years hence-- I only saw one 1897 catalogue bound like this, that one being at the Sterling Library of Yale University. I mentioned in the Mosher Press bibliography (p. 194, entry 202) that: "the wrappers of the Yale copy are different from those of other copies examined in that they are printed on gray paper with the title and date printed in black-letter on the front cover." So the Bishop Collection now includes a copy of this extremely scarce variant cover as well.

June 30, 2011 – Received a lovely decorative leather binding on *The Poems of Master François Villon of Paris* (Mosher, 1900) from Sherry Bruning of Trianglehead Books in Vallejo, CA. Actually I saw it on eBay and the listing allowed me to make an offer. After telephoning Ms. Bruning and leaving my questions on her answering machine and

in an email, I got a prompt, courteous reply. I was willing to gamble a bit and so sent her my offer which was, to my surprise, accepted and not counter-offered. The book was mailed the next day and everything about the transaction was spotless. Speaking of spotless, so was the book when it arrived. The binding was of the high quality, roughly contemporaneous goatskin that I prefer, although not a signed binding, I was more than pleased with the acquisition. The hand-tooling is rich and exact with a large central rectangular frame tooled on the front cover, incorporating the book's title against a ground of fleurs-de-lys and other tools. Everything about it leans toward the professional ranks and it's a handsome addition to the collection.

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