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A STEVENSON EXHIBITION

**R**OBERT LOUIS STEVENSON died on December 3, 1894. Fifty years have since passed. "It is difficult to believe that the time will ever come in which Stevenson will not be remembered as the most beloved of the writers of that age which he did so much to cheer and stimulate." So wrote Edmund Gosse in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. On the fiftieth anniversary of Stevenson's death, the Colby College Library opened a memorial exhibition of his books and letters and other memorabilia.

Of particular interest locally was a series of a dozen delicately beautiful books bearing a Portland, Maine, imprint. Published in limited editions by Thomas B. Mosher of Portland, and many of them printed by George D. Loring of Portland, these are the Stevenson books in a Maine format:

1. Will o' the Mill, 1899
2. A Lodging for the Night, 1900
3. The Sire de Maletroit's Door, 1900
4. Underwoods (poems), 1900: No. 53 of 100 copies printed on Japan vellum
5. Francois Villon, 1901
6. Aes Triplex, and Other Essays, 1902; reprinted 1903
7. Thrawn Janet, and Markheim, 1903
8. Virginius Puerisque, 1904
9. An Apology for Idlers, and Other Essays, 1905; reprinted 1908 and 1916
10. Father Damien, 1905
11. Crabbed Age and Youth, 1907; on Japan vellum
12. The Flight of the Princess, 1912

The dates here given are, of course, the dates of the Mosher reprints, not the dates of the original Stevenson editions.

On January 3, 1885, Stevenson wrote to a friend: "Sargent has been and painted my portrait; a very nice fellow

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he is, and is supposed to have done well; it is a poetical but very chicken-boned figure-head, as thus represented." This portrait by John Singer Sargent now hangs in the Taft Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio. A photographic copy of the portrait was shown in the Colby exhibition, together with a copy of the portrait by Nerli, done in Stevenson's Samoan days, and also a photograph of R.L.S. with his step-son Lloyd Osbourne, in Samoa, about 1890.

Shown with this picture was a first edition of *The Ebb-Tide* by R.L.S. and Lloyd Osbourne (London, Heinemann, 1894), in its unusual gilt cloth. Also a copy of the first edition of Stevenson's *Songs of Travel* (London, Chatto, 1896), and a first edition of *Kidnapped* (London, 1886), with its interesting map of the Cruise of the *Covenant*. Special attention was attracted to the copy of *Prayers Written at Vailima*, designed, written out, and brilliantly "illuminated" (after the fashion of mediaeval MSS.) by Alberto Sangorski (London, Chatto, 1910).

Other special Limited Editions placed on exhibition included the following:

1. *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Study* by A[lice] B[rown] with a Prelude and a Postlude by L[ouise] I[mogen] G[uiney]. Boston: Copeland & Day, 1895. This copy is one of 250 printed at the Heintzemann Press, Boston, and bound in gray boards, with linen spine, in a style made famous by the Kelmscott Press. Louise Guiney's Postlude is quoted on page 137 of this QUARTERLY, and Alice Brown's study is quoted at some length on page 147 below.

2. *A Seamark: A Threnody for Robert Louis Stevenson* by Bliss Carmen: Boston, Copeland & Day, 1895. One of fifty copies on hand-made paper; The Everett Press, Boston.

3. *Aes Triplex*, printed by the DeVenne Press, for the 160 American subscribers who gave \$10 or more to The Stevenson Memorial Fund in 1898. This copy, with gilt letters on manila wrappers and in a protective box, was printed for Charles Henry Webb, and authenticated by Charles Fairchild, Chairman of the Fund.

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4. *A Christmas Sermon*: New York, Scribners, 1900. This famous *Sermon* first appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*, December 1888, and was collected by Stevenson in 1892 in *Across the Plains, with Other . . . Essays*. The exhibited copy, printed by D. B. Updike at the Merrymount Press, Boston, is the first separate book publication of the sermon. It was presented to the library by President-Emeritus Franklin W. Johnson.

5. *Poems Hitherto Unpublished*, with Introduction and Notes by George S. Hellman, 2 vols., Boston, 1916; one of 484 gilt-topped copies printed for members of the Bibliophile Society.

6. *When the Devil was Well*, with an Introduction by William P. Trent: Boston, 1921. One of 450 copies of a hitherto unpublished story, printed for members of the Bibliophile Society.

7. *Poems Hitherto Unpublished*, with Introduction and Notes by George S. Hellman and William P. Trent: one vol., Boston, 1921; boxed. One of 450 copies printed for members of the Bibliophile Society.

8. *A Lodging for the Night*: New York, 1923. One of 300 copies printed in red and black by Carl P. Rollins for The Grolier Club.

Among interesting Stevenson association-books, two may be mentioned; both are in the Edwin Arlington Robinson Collection:—

1. *A Child's Garden of Verses*, illustrated by Charles Robinson: New York, Scribners; London, John Lane; 1897. First Illustrated Edition. This copy was a Christmas gift from the poet Edwin Arlington Robinson to his niece Ruth Robinson. It is inscribed: "Ruth from Uncle Win. Christmas 1897."

2. *Treasure Island*, Washington, D. C., National Home Library Foundation, 1932. Presented to Robinson by Sherman F. Mittell, editor of The Jacket Library.

The Stevenson letters which were a prominent part of the anniversary exhibition deserve special comment and explanation.