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YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

The Editors wish to express their thanks to the donation subscribers, writers and questioners for the first seven issues of the TBR Newsletter. When we started we didn’t realize that we would have as much response as we got. It may seem modest in comparison to the professional magazine circulation statistics, but to us it was overwhelming.

You will find a new subscription blank attached and we encourage you to not only send in money [], but also to think again about the Newsletter being an attempt at a network. It needs your continued communication, as much as it needs financial support. It also needs to find a wider readership. We can get a price break on printing, so except for postage, more subscribers could mean a smaller donation in the future, as well as more chances at getting more good articles and information to print.

Let us hear from you. Please be one of the core number of only seventy-five needed to finance the 1993 issues (#8-11). This is only a part of the current mailing. We look forward to continuing what many have noted as a good idea. Thanks again.

Linda Herman and Cynthia Bruns


KRAUS, Joe W. “The publishing activities of Way + Williams, Chicago, 1895-98.” Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, LXX, No. 2 (1976). Presents biographical information about the founders of the firm and describes their major works. Also includes a detailed, preliminary checklist of the firm’s publications.


Marion Louise Peabody was a descendant of Lieutenant Francis Peabody of St. Albans, England, who came to America in 1635 and settled at Topsfield, Massachusetts in 1667. Lt. Peabody was married to a daughter of Reginald Foster, who is mentioned by Walter Scott in “Marmion” and “The Lay of the Last Minstrel”. Her father, Charles Kilham Peabody, a prosperous and respected merchant, married Susan Josephine Morrill in 1868. Marion, the couple’s oldest daughter, was born in 1869. A second daughter, Josephine Preston Peabody, was born in 1874. Two other children died in infancy. [1]

Mrs. Peabody taught both of her daughters to paint in watercolors as part of a genteel education. Only Marion, however, pursued art as a career. Josephine turned to literature and became a well-known turn-of-the-century poetess. Marion was still attending classes at the Eric Pape School of Art in Boston when her first book decorations were published in 1898. Of these two early projects, the cover and illustrations for The Fairy Spinning Wheel by Catulle Mendes (Boston, Richard G. Badger) are the most ambitious and least successful. Far more pleasing is the simple cover Marion designed for her sister Josephine’s first book of poetry, The Wayfarers (Boston, Copeland and Day). The original drawing for this cover is preserved in Harvard University’s Houghton Library. [2] It shows a simplified bird’s wing drawn with great assurance in black ink and signed with the monogram “MLP”. For the cover of The Wayfarers, this drawing was reproduced in black on dull green cloth on both front and back, the design being reproduced in reverse on the back cover. The image recalls the folded wings on the helmet of Mercury in the painting I Lock My Door Upon Myself (1891) by the Belgian symbolist Ferdinand Knopff. A similar brooding, dreamy quality is characteristic of Josephine’s poems, where the bird frequently represents the artist, usually thwarted: caged or dead. [3] Although Marion’s cover design appears restrained and highly appropriate, both sisters were disappointed in the appearance of the book, while they thought Marion’s crude and rather clumsy designs for The Fairy Spinning Wheel were splendid. The little book was well-received, however; a notice in The Literary Review [4] even commented upon its “delightful cover” and reproduced a portrait of Marion L. Peabody alongside that of her sister.

The next few years saw a series of remarkable designs. Trade bindings are not often a medium for self-expression, but Peabody’s best work achieves a distinctive quality that transcends pure decoration. The tangled web on the cover of The Loom of Destiny by Arthur J. Stringer (Boston, Small, Maynard and Co., 1899) is surely one of the most unusual and striking of American trade bindings. On the front cover, a pair of hands struggles with the confining threads; on the back, a pair of shears reaches through to cut the coils. The design is printed in metallic silver [5] on dark blue, an unusual and highly effective color combina-
tion. This motif was further developed in a cover for Gelett Burgess, *A Little Sister of Destiny* (Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1906), where the treatment is much more decorative and incorporates a tiny cupid as well as twisted coils and struggling hands. Not unrelated either is the design for Lloyd Mifflin, *The Fleeting Nymph and Other Verses* (Boston, Small, Maynard and Co., 1905) in which the nude nymph flees towards a pond covered with floating waterlilies, but is entangled in a dense mat of cattail-like foliage.

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to see all of these designs with their fin-de-siecle imagery as direct descendants of Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s influential novelette *The Yellow Wall Paper* in which the principle character, trapped in an unsatisfying marriage, imagines that there is a woman imprisoned behind the design of the yellow wallpaper on her bedroom wall and finally, in the descending spiral of her madness, comes to identify with the woman herself. Towards the conclusion, she says:

“I didn’t realize for quite a long time what the thing was that showed behind that dim sub-pattern, but now I am quite sure it is a woman...

“And all the time she is trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern -- it strangles so.” [6]

*The Yellow Wall Paper* originally appeared in *The New England Magazine* in January 1892. Subsequently it was published in book form by Small, Maynard & Co. in 1899, the same year as Peabody’s cover for *The Loom of Destiny*. The cover design, in orange and black on pale yellow paper-covered boards, is by Elisha Brown Bird. The abstract tangle of forms, which at times appears purely decorative, at other times resolves into mocking faces and staring eyes or threatens to dissolve altogether. It is indeed a design to drive a woman mad. Trained as an architect at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Bird designed book covers, posters and bookplates in a wide variety of graphic styles. The cover for *The Yellow Wall Paper* is possibly his most original design. Other book covers by Bird include those for William Rideing, *The Captured Cunarder* (Boston, Lamson, Wolfe and Co., 1896); and Walter Leon Sawyer, *A Local Habitation* (Boston, Small, Maynard and Co., 1899). In later life Bird worked for the *Boston Evening Transcript* and *The New York Times*, successfully making the translation from turn-of-the-century decorative designer to twentieth-century graphic artist. [7]

Another of Peabody’s favorite motifs, the waterlily, decorated the cover of H.M. Caldwell Company’s 1903 edition of Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *The House of Life*. This is one of Peabody’s most elaborate projects, including title-page and page borders as well as the cover design, which was printed on both front and back covers in gold on white. The waterlily motif was also used by Peabody in a wallpaper design which was included in the first exhibition of the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts in 1897 [8] and in the background of her cover for *The Fleeting Nymph* (1906; see above).

Peabody does not appear to have designed any book covers after 1910. Her sister Josephine married in 1906; her mother died in 1911, leaving her entirely alone. In 1912, she sailed for Italy, where she settled permanently, only return-
ing to the United States for brief visits.

[1] This information is drawn from a “Geneology of the Peabody Family” by Marion Louise Peabody, which is included in the Josephine Preston Peabody papers in the Houghton Library, Harvard University.


[3] For example in the following lines from The Wayfarers: “Oh, my heart has two wild wings that ever would be flying” (“Spring in April”); “Thoughts wingless that would follow thee” (“Horizon”); “I took the heart out of my bosom like a frozen bird” (“Orpheus in Hades”); “Cold wings and songless throat” (“Dreams”).


[5] True silver was not used for book decoration because it tarnished badly. The Literary World, Vol. XXXI No. 5 (March 3, 1900), p.76 described the use of “nickel-plate ornamentation”.


[Editor’s note: I found a citation for Charlotte Perkins Gilman under Charlotte Perkins Stetson.]
Notes + Queries: Bookstore windows of 1890-1915

Has anyone seen a photograph of how books with decorated covers were displayed in store windows (or even in the stores)? Were they displayed with the dust jacket removed (since frequently the cloth cover was more vivid and colorful)? Please send any leads on old catalogs, articles, or other sources and how they might be seen to the Editor. Lowell Thing

Notes + Queries: More on cover description

A standard description of cover designs should, I think, serve two main functions: 1) to provide a verbal description in lieu of a picture; 2) to allow a person to determine whether the book they have before them is the same as the book described. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, there is probably no practical justification for attempting a complete verbal description of the cover design; it would seem to be sufficient to provide a simple account of what appears. Freeman’s proposal, built upon the capabilities of computer processing, almost seems to want to provide a way of reproducing the design through specifying a coordinate system.

The vast majority of the books with decorated covers appear in only one variation. Forgery does not yet seem to be a problem. Given the two functions of description that I noted above, a simple account, specifying cloth texture and color, and describing the design, would seem sufficient for any practical bibliographic purpose, even when a book has been issued in different bindings (for example, I have six copies of Ralph Conner’s *Black Rock: A tale of the Selkirk’s*. The designs of four are very different; the fifth is a variation on one of the four; and the sixth is identical to one of the four, but with a different cloth, and with the design printed rather than stamped.) Charles S. Kamen

Notes + Queries: TBR #8

It is my pleasure to announce that we will have data from Charles Gullans and John Espey concerning Elisha Brown Bird (EBB) and Theodore Brown Hapgood Jr. (H) for future issues. Does anyone have something to share on these two decorative gentlemen? (I mean Elisha and Theodore!)

Notes + Queries: WJ

Would someone do an article on William(s) Jordan. He has done at least fifty covers, and some of them are most interesting.
Marion Louise Peabody  
by  
Charles Gullans and John Espey

Peabody, Marion Louise, b. Brooklyn, NY, April 17, 1869—alive in 1934 (Mallett, Index of Artists), sister of the poet, Josephine Preston Peabody, in whose Diary and Letters (1925) there is much incidental information. In Arthur Hosking, The Artists' Year Book (Chicago, 1905), she is listed as working in "book cover decoration and designs in black and white and color. Is instructor at the Eric Pape School of Art (Boston)," but she had taught at the Pape school since 1901, and had herself been trained there. There is important material in Nancy Finlay, Artists of the Book in Boston (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 25, 54-5, 59, 68-9, 98-9. And there is much material in the unpublished portions of her sister's diaries, 1897-1922, in the Houghton Library, Harvard. After 1912 she lived permanently in Italy.

Black and white decorations:

- House Beautiful, 10 (November, 1901), 353, snd M. P., p. 371, unsnd.; 11 (December, 1901), 51, snd M. L. P., and (January, 1902), 110, snd M. P. They are all attributed to her in the tables of contents.

Designed Books:

Monogram 1: M  Monogram 2: MP  Monogram 3: MP  
L
P

or: M L P


-----. *In This Our World*. Boston: Small Maynard, 1898. Snd.


Omar Khayyam. *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. New York: Dodge, [c1916]. The cover is not signed, but the decorations are.


Porter, Charlotte, and Helen R. Clarke. *A Little Book of Poets' Parleys*, arranged by...with designs by Marion L. Peabody. New York: Crowell, 1903. The cover is not signed and has been adapted from a medieval or Renaissance illumination. The borders are signed. Advt. *Book Buyer*, n. s., *The Lamp*, 27 (December, 1903), in the preliminaries, "In two colors with page designs by Marion L. Peabody."


Stringer, Arthur. *The Loom of Destiny*. Boston: Small Maynard, 1898. Snd. On some copies only the front cover is stamped with the design, and on a few the design has been printed upside down. Ill. Finlay, p. 59, with an important stylistic discussion.
Notes + Queries: TBR #2 booboo

On page 16 of the serial references bibliography I mistakenly named the Cary Collection at MIT, it should read Rochester Institute of Technology. Pardons to all, as I should have known better having received copies of the exhibit cards from them. I quote from the John Sippel report in the GARC Newsletter v.8 #8 (Dec. 1980/Jan 1981): “The most recent exhibit was a selective survey of American trade bindings from the period 1890 through 1915. The material displayed was largely drawn from the private collections of Herbert Johnson, Melbert B. Cary, Jr. Professor of Graphic Arts, and David Pankow, the Cary librarian, both of whom have a special enthusiasm for the subject.

The show was mounted in response to a growing interest in the elaborately decorative trade bindings typical of that time. It included only volumes produced for sale through trade channels (that is, traditional book stores).

The characteristic ornamentation of the covers grew out of a need to attract buyers before the wide-spread use of dust jackets. ‘The covers of that era were often much more beautifully produced than the rest of the book,’ Mr. Johnson noted. ‘A great deal of money, time and effort was lavished on them because, just as many publishers today feel that jackets sell books, it was then felt that the cover sold the book.’ This led to a flowering of multi-colored decorative effects, and fostered the technical developments in stamping and diemaking needed to produce them.

It was not unusual for publishers to spend more on the binding than on any other part of the book. Modern labor costs ensure that the accomplishments of that period will never be duplicated. Mr. Johnson observed that, ‘When a book was stamped in four different colors -- perhaps gold leaf and three colors of ink -- the number of man-hours spend producing 50,000 copies of a best-seller was mind-boggling.’

Included in the display were modern brass and copper binding dies, and foil used for stamping. The exhibit labels traced the sequence of stamping for some of the designs shown, explained the techniques of stamping with ink and foil, and discussed the various patterns for book cloths.

Some of the greatest designers in American printing history were represented in the show: Bruce Rogers, T.M.Cleland, Will Bradley, Frank Hazenplug, Bertram Goodhue and Theodore Brown Hapgood. A significant part, however, was made up of the the work of those Mr. Johnson categorized as ‘great unknowns,’ among them Margaret Armstrong, Sarah Wyman Whitman, Amy Richards, Amy Sacher, George Wharton Edwards, Troy and Margaret Kinney, and Marion Peabody.”


    Signed - Barringer + Sawyer + CSUF #4019 [Fascinating design of a horse with wings in clown dress sitting playing a lute!]


JACKSON, Gabrielle E. *Peggy Stewart at school*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1915 [c1912]

    Signed (with paper onlay) - CSUF #2623

JACKSON, Margaret Doyle. *A daughter of the pit*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903

    Signed - Ohio


    Unsigned - Ogle


    Signed - Ogle


    Signed - Lehner


    [c1908] - Signed - Herman


    - ? - PAQ (Jay Chambers)


    Unsigned - Lehner


    - ? - Munzer


    Signed - CSUF #3900

JOHNSON, Owen. *In the name of liberty: A story of the terror*. New York: Century, 1905 [c1905]

    Signed - Ohio + CSUF #2484


    - ? - PAQ (Lee Thayer)


JORDAN, Kate. *The creeping tide: A romance of an old neighborhood*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1913

    Signed - Ohio


KEAYS, H. A. Mitchell. *I and my true love*. Boston: Small, Maynard, 1908...

    Signed - Ohio


    Signed - CSUF #4020

KELLOCK, Harold. *"Mr. Hobby": A cheerful romance*. New York: Century Co., 1913 [c1913]

    Signed - Ohio + Sawyer + CSUF #2522


    Signed - Ogle
- Kamen
KEON, Grace. When love is strong. New York: Benziger Bros., 1907 - Signed - Ohio
KING, Charles (General) The iron brigade: A story of the army of the Potomac. New York:
Dillingham Co [c1902] - Signed - Lehner (Lee Thayer) + CSUF #3401
- Ogle
KINGSLEY, Charles. The tutor's story. New York: Dodd, Mead + Co., 1916 - Signed - Ogle
[nd] - Signed - CSUF #1944 [Paper onlay signed, also with: Copyright 1907 by Hurst + Co.]
KINGSLEY, Florence Morse. The intellectual Miss Lamb. New York: Century Co., 1906 - Signed
- CSUF #2489
KINGSLEY, Florence Morse. The needle's eye. New York: Funk + Wagnalls, 1902 - Signed
- Barringer
(Jay Chambers)
KNAPP, Adeline. The boy and the baron. New York: Century Co. [c1901, 1902] - Signed
- Munzer + Barringer (Series binding for the 'St. Nicholas Books')
KNAPP, Adeline. The well in the desert. New York: Century Co., 1908 - Signed - Ohio + Ogle
KNAPP, Adeline. The well in the desert. New York: Grosset + Dunlap [c1908] - Signed
- CSUF #2466
KNOX, Margaret. The rainy day book for boys and girls, by Margaret Knox and Anna M.
Luetkenhaus. New York: Century Co. [c1924] - Signed - CSUF #2488
KUNZ, George Frederick. The book of the pearl. by George Frederick and Charles Hugh
Stevenson. New York: Century Co., 1908 - Signed - Lehner (Lee Thayer) + Barringer
We have received from Malcolm M. Ferguson of Concord Massachusetts a query regarding a bookplate of Margaret Armstrong's. He has sent us a copy of the bookplate and would like to know if this is the bookplate referenced as helping to identify the books she designed. Ferguson found this bookplate in Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey's, More Songs from Vagabondia. He also asks if she had more bookplates of her own, perhaps some that she designed? Does anyone have any comments for Mr. Ferguson?

Malcolm Ferguson also sent us a comment on the Gullens and Espey MA bibliography. First in regard to Item #71, the R.H.Russell first, does exist as he owns a copy. He would also like to make an addition to the list. It is A Truce and Other Stories, written by Mary Tappan Wright published by Scribner in 1985. It has the same cover as Bliss Perry's item #196, Salem Kittredge and Other Stories. Interesting to note how many times Scribners used the same cover again and again.

A Mystery Novel by Margaret Armstrong

Margaret Armstrong, The Man With No Face, New York: Random House, 1940.

I do have to marvel what a versatile person Margaret Armstrong was. We are all aware of her design work, and you may have read her biographies but did you know she also wrote mystery novels? As I started the Man With No Face, I was a bit skeptical as a person can't be good at everything, can they? However, as I read the book, I found myself drawn further and further into the plot with the suspense delightfully building until the exciting and original climax.

The plot does not follow the standard mystery formula as the author reveals who did it and why in the prologue. The suspense develops as the two amateur sleuths, Minton Marbury and James Northcote, attempt to solve one crime only to find the case more complicated and the list of victims growing. The pace of the novel quickens in the race to find the murderer before he kills again. If you enjoy reading a murder mystery, try this one from one of our favorite book cover designers.

The book cover is a disappointment. It is fairly standard issue for the time and there is no evidence of Margaret Armstrong having any input into the cover.
The Myrtle Reed Book Covers

Myrtle Reed was a novelist, poet, and essayist. She was best known for the novel, *Lavender and Old Lace*. Reed wrote saccharine sentimental love novels which were rather well read at the time and she enjoyed a certain popularity. Her first novel, *Love Letters of a Musician*, was published in 1898. The following year the book was reissued by G.P. Putnam and Margaret Armstrong was commissioned to do the cover. MA continued doing the book covers for the Myrtle Reed books until the author’s early death by suicide on August 18, 1911.

In all, Margaret Armstrong did fourteen book covers for the Myrtle Reed novels. The majority of them are done with white and gold printed on lavender with vertically ribbed cloth, others are done in white and gold on pale green. But it is the lavender books which are especially distinctive and easily remembered. Together the books make a lovely set on a shelf. These novels are written by a woman and for women. Margaret Armstrong’s covers reflect that. There is a tasteful and refined aura of femininity in the Myrtle Reed book covers which would have appealed to the prospective buyer.

Outside of the color used, the Myrtle Reed book covers are all very individual with each design very different from the others. There is, however, a unifying theme in the continuing use of flowers and flowing vines in the design of each book cover. A good example is: *Old Rose and Silver* (1909), which is typical of Margaret Armstrong’s strong use of the flowing line to direct the eye through the design. Like so much of MA’s work, this piece is not symmetrical but still does contain a strong sense of balance. A violet, gold and white book cover is *Lavendar and Old Lace* (1902). This cover is very different in style and has a carefully symmetrical design. It is the use of color which gives this set makes this set

The following illustrations are included to give you a feeling for a few of the Myrtle Reed book covers done by Margaret Armstrong. Please excuse the black and white copying. It does not truly illustrate the sensitivity that MA was able to give these covers.