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Bushrod Washington

Book-Plates of Well-Known Americans

by

CLIFFORD N. CARVER

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Each signed by the author.

Clifford W. Carver /

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BOOK-PLATES OF WELL- KNOWN AMERICANS

Any collector who appreciates art, as well as the pleasure of collecting, finds an unusual amount of fascination in book-plates. The use of book-plates is of some antiquity as mention has been made of one dated in the middle of the 15th century. This somewhat awkward name used for the labels of ownership frequently placed on the inside covers of books, is replaced by *ex-libris* abroad and this expression seems far more suitable than the misleading term "book-plate". To quote a book on *ex-libris* written 1895, "Book-plates may be roughly divided into two kinds—name labels and armorial plates"; although in the present age allegorical plates and others ornamented with miniature landscapes are coming into popularity. Artistic *ex-libris* although frequently mentioned are found infrequently.

In presenting this modest collection of interesting *ex-libris* from the books of well-known Americans, I wish not only to give pleasure to those who may enjoy the reproductions but to express my appreciation of the kindness of many contributors to my col-

lection and to Mr. Charles Dexter Allen for the use of his Revere and George Washington plates, which are the only reproductions not made from plates in my personal collection.

Many of the older American *ex-libris* that might have been included in these pages have been omitted because in most cases the plates have already become well-known to collectors and those interested in the subject through the various excellent works on American *ex-libris*. I have endeavored to gather together, in these pages, plates belonging to persons in as many different spheres of public life as possible : authors, poets, statesmen, theologians, orators, financiers and educationists.



The Washington plates are of special interest to Americans, as it is said that the idea of the American flag was conceived from the Washington arms appearing on the plates. A great similarity exists between the plates of George Washington and his nephew Bushrod Washington, although slight changes in the erroneous heraldry of the first plate can be readily seen. No date is to be found on either plate, and it is a matter of difficulty to determine whether the plates were engraved here or in England.

A plain armorial plate with the motto *Vera Pro Gratis* on a ribbon beneath the shield was used by Daniel Webster, statesman and jurist, his signature at the bottom completing the design.

Paul Revere, of Revolutionary fame, though trained in the profession of a goldsmith, nevertheless took up the art of engraving (with but slight success). His own plate is an excellent example of his productions of *ex-libris*.

The *ex-libris* of George Bancroft, the historian, represents a cherub bearing a scroll upon which is a Greek motto. Below the cherub appears the owner's signature, a quite common custom with older plates.

The charming book mark used by Oliver Wendell Holmes well deserves a prominent place as being one of the most artistic, as well as interesting plates in this collection. A beautiful representation of the "Chambered Nautilus"—"the Ship of Pearl", as he calls it—is the chief feature of the plate.

Henry Ward Beecher used a plain plate with his signature and address upon it, whereas his successor in Plymouth Church, Newell Dwight Hillis, uses a plate of more elaborate design. Dr. Hillis' plate shows a bust of Minerva mounted upon a pedestal and having a mosaic background. In the

foreground a book-pile, an hour-glass, a quill, and ink are shown, with the motto "*Haec sunt mea instrumenta*", appearing back of them.

Turning to the plate of a playwright one finds that of David Belasco of great artistic value. It is one of the most carefully executed of the modern work and typifies the care shown by the man himself in all his work as playwright and manager.

Known as the greatest giver of public libraries in the world, Andrew Carnegie has chosen a most simple but attractive *ex-libris* for use in his personal library. To quote a letter from Mr. Carnegie, the architect of Dunfermline Library, which Mr. Carnegie gave to his native town (the first library he ever gave), asked him for his coat-of-arms to be placed over the doorway. Mr. Carnegie replied that he had none but suggested a rising sun, its rays spreading, with the words "Let there be light"; and this feature is the basis of his own *ex-libris*.

The *ex-libris* of the Hon. Chauncey M. Depew was made about twenty years ago by Stauffer. The figure of an old man is represented seated at a table placed in front of an open window and holding a paper with the Depew arms upon it. Books are also given a prominent place in the design, and the whole

is enclosed in a simple frame, making a most artistic pictorial plate.

Among the literary plates of the present day, the simple wolf head appearing on Jack London's plate is among the most attractive. Since he is a writer of animal life and "The Call of the Wild", which is among his best known books, being the story of a wolf, the plate is most appropriate.

Mr. Morgan uses an armorial plate in his great library, and in its severity it is very artistic. An armorial plate is also used by Ex-President Roosevelt; both plates being engraved by stationers.

The President's plate was both designed and engraved by Frederick Spencely, one of America's most prominent engravers of *ex-libris*. In the plate is shown a splendid reproduction of Mr. Taft's family home, the seal of the government, the balances of justice, a book of law, and the seal of his University—Yale. To quote Mr. Taft: "The house is that of my grandfather Samuel D. Torrey at Millbury, Mass., and is now owned and occupied by my aunt Miss Delia Torrey. It is where I spent the summers of my boyhood and my college vacations."

The plate of Henry van Dyke, clergyman, author and scholar, which in the original is of a beautiful sepia tone, may be classed

among the most artistic of the present day *ex-libris*. Dr. van Dyke, being a lover of fishing and a great reader as well as an author, has represented upon his plate in a somewhat symbolical form his two occupations. "Although they are seldom chronologically combined", says Professor van Dyke, a nude figure is seen seated beside a river bank, reading and with patience holding a rod. His crest, as well as his motto are also artistically worked into the design.

The White book-plate was prepared by Wyon of London, the seal cutter to the British government and has been used for the collection of books which the Ex-President of Cornell turned over in a great part to the university—about thirty thousand volumes in all. The quotation from Publius Syrus has reference to the fact that the library is historical, hence the words: "The day after is the disciple of the day before."

The other example shown is the plate used by Mr. White at the present time in his personal library.

The present Governor of New Jersey and Ex-President of Princeton University has chosen what is known among collectors as a "book-pile" for his plate and the extreme simplicity of the plate adds to its charm.



George Bancroft

W. W. Beecher.

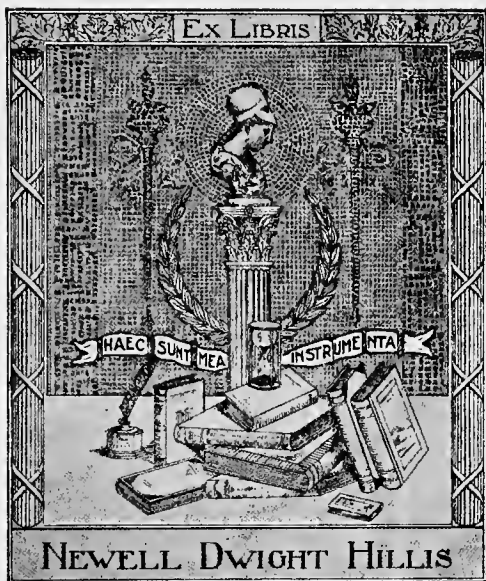
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PER AMPLIORA AD ALTIORA

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

JACK LONDON



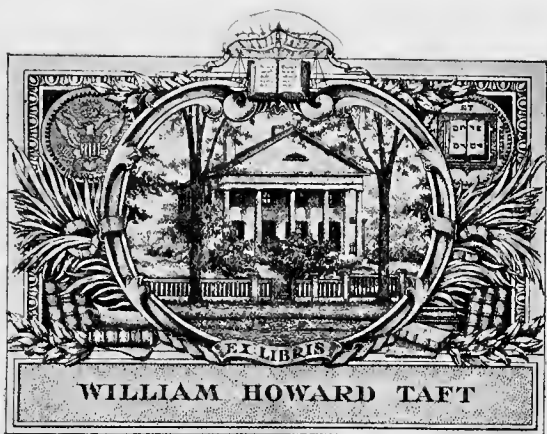


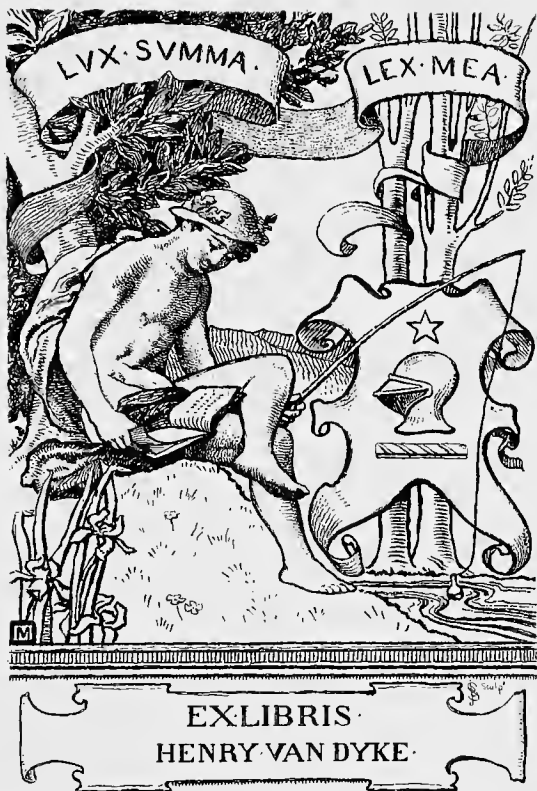


Paul Revere



Theodore Roosevelt.





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