Selections from the Morris-Levin Collection of Publishers’ Bookbindings, 1815-1915

Over fifty years, Ellen Morris and Edward Levin collected more than three thousand volumes representing the first century of commercial book design in Europe and the United States. Morris and Levin curated the historic 2000 Grolier Club exhibition *The Art of Publishers’ Bookbindings, 1815-1915*, and wrote the accompanying print catalogue, now a standard reference.

Honey & Wax Booksellers and Johnson Rare Books & Archives are proud to represent the Morris-Levin collection of publishers’ bindings, issued from the end of the Napoleonic Wars through the beginning of World War I. We are currently offering books to institutions and collectors via a series of capsule collections, representing coherent groups of bindings organized by genre, style, origin, designer, and theme. We’ll be posting some of these collections to the ExLibris list, and quoting others directly.

If you are in search of a particular kind of binding, we will work with you to meet your needs. Morris and Levin were exacting in their condition standards, and the books they collected are in uniformly excellent condition: this is an unusual opportunity to fill gaps and strengthen institutional holdings in an efficient way.

In October 2023, we will offer hundreds of individual bindings from the Morris-Levin collection at Rare Books LA, the Seattle Antiquarian Book Fair, and the Boston Antiquarian Book Fair. We hope to see you there!

RareBooksLA.com - October 7-8, 2023
SeattleBookFair.com - October 14-15, 2023
ABAA.org/BostonBookFair - October 27-29, 2023

info@honeyandwaxbooks.com  contact@johnsonrarebooks.com
THE DIAMOND CLASSICS OF THE 1820s

This capsule collection features a group of ten Diamond Classics issued in London during the 1820s. These accessible, near-miniature volumes were designed as “convenient Manuals for the Scholar, the Traveller, and the juvenile Student,” and marketed to an aspirational reading public.

William Pickering was long credited as the “inventor” of publishers’ cloth, and his Diamond Classics represent some of the earliest English examples. Rival firms like Jones & Company were also experimenting with cloth bindings during the 1820s. For a nuanced account of this transitional moment in English publishing, see Paul W. Nash’s “Two Hundred Years of Publishers’ Cloth” (Journal of the Printing Historical Society, 2020).

The ten titles collected here include four published by Pickering, among them an unopened first edition of his New Testament, set in tiny “Diamond Greek” type expressly cast for the book (1828). The other six were issued by Jones & Company in their own Diamond Classics series: particularly notable are the The English Garden, bound in the publisher’s fragile moiré silk (1825), and the roan cathedral binding on the Devotional Diamond Bible (circa 1826).

$3500.
Alignieri, Dante. *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri.*
2 volumes.

issue / series: First Pickering edition, probably second issue; Pickering 'Diamond Classics' series.

advertisements: 4 pp. publisher's advertisements at rear of Vol. ii.

publication price: 10 s.

[bookplate]: [Vol. ii, rear pastedown 'William Semprini']


binding series: 'Diamond Classics'.

binding designer: unidentified.

title page:

binder: George Pickering: London.

printer: C. Corrall: London.

materials: dark red [PANTONE 1815] vertical fine-ribbed cloth over card; spine with 1 [35 (14) × 14] buff paper label onlay.

front cover: without decoration.

spine: label with black-printed ruled borders, and titling 'Dante | Divina | Commedia | Vol. i. [ii.] | 10 s.'

rear cover: without decoration.

endpapers: buff paper.

designs: all edges uncut; top edge unopened.

variants: also [earlier?] issued in reddish-brown flat weave cloth.

London: [Jones & Company], 1821 [but not issued before August 1826]. [bound with]
The Devotional Diamond Pocket Testament: with Notes and Reflections, by the Rev. W. Gurney, A.M.: Rector of St. Clements Danes, Strand; Minister of West-Street Chapel; and Lecturer of Saint Mildred’s, Poultry.

London: J. White, 1816 [but not issued before August 1826].


Page decorations: Devotional Diamond Bible with decorated title page with vignette, steel engraving.

Advertisements: 1 p. publisher’s advertisements and ‘Directions to the Binder’ at rear.

Place marker: brown silk ribbon [double length, not attached].

[Ms annotations]: [ownership inscription, front flyleaf “Joanna Mares | 7 Catherine St | Strand | Janv. 7th 1839.”].

Dimensions: 128 × 73 × 41 mm.

Binding designer: unidentified.

BINDER: unidentified.

Printer: unidentified.


Front cover: blind-stamped floral ornamental borders, and full-cover cathedral design with central oval panel.

Spine: blind-stamped floral ornamental borders, and full-length cathedral design ; gilt-stamped black letter titling ‘Bible’.

Rear cover: repeating front.

Turn-ins: gilt-stamped ornaments.

Endpapers: buff paper with marbling in blue, red, yellow and black.

Edges: all edges gilt.
Cottin, (Madame) [Sophie]. *Elizabeth; or, the exiles of Siberia: a tale, founded on facts.* : from the French of Madame Cottin.


issue / series: extra title page dated 27 August 1825 ; 'Jones’s Diamond Classics' series.

illustrations: frontispiece and decorated extra title page, steel engravings with tissue guard, by Stalker & Neele after illustrations by Harvey.

publication price: 2 s.

dimensions: 93 × 55 × 11 mm.

binding series: 'Jones’s Diamond Classics'.

binding designer: unidentified.

printer: Andrew & John M. Duncan : Glasgow.

materials: brown [PANTONE 438] ribbon-embossed straight-grain morocco-grain silk over card ; spine with 1 [28 × 16 mm] black paper label onlay.

front cover: without decoration.

spine: label onlay with gold-printed rules, and titling 'Diamond Classics, Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia.'

rear cover: without decoration.

endpapers: cornflower blue coated paper.

drains: all edges gilt.

variants: identical to others in 'Jones’s Diamond Poets' series and 'Jones’s Diamond Classics' series, including [Dryden] *The Poetical Works*, [Prior] *The Poetical Works* ; others in 'Jones’s Diamond Poets' series and 'Jones’s Diamond Classics' series also issued identical in crimson, including Young *The Complaint* ; earlier series issues in moiré silk.

- **issue / series**: issued 1826, as extra title page dated 1826 ; 'Jones's Diamond Poets' series.
- **illustrations**: each volume with frontispiece and decorated extra title page, steel engravings with tissue guard.
- **publication price**: 8 s. 6 d.
- **dimensions**: 94 × 55 × 19 mm.
- **binding series**: 'Jones's Diamond Poets'.
- **binding designer**: unidentified.
- **printer**: Andrew & John M. Duncan : Glasgow.
- **materials**: brown [PANTONE 438] ribbon-embossed straight-grain morocco-grain silk over card ; spine with 1 [27 × 11 mm] black paper label onlay.
- **front cover**: without decoration.
- **spine**: label onlay with gold-printed rules, and titling 'Diamond | Poets. | Dryden. | 2 Vols. | vol. 1. [ii].'
- **rear cover**: without decoration.
- **endpapers**: cornflower blue coated paper.
- **edges**: all edges gilt.
- **variants**: identical to others in 'Jones's Diamond Poets' series and 'Jones's Diamond Classics' series, including Cottin *Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia*, [Prior] *The Poetical Works* ; others in 'Jones's Diamond Poets' series and 'Jones's Diamond Classics' series also issued identical in crimson, including Young *The Complaint* ; earlier series issues in moiré silk.
[Horace]. Quintus Horatius Flaccus.

issue / series: Third Pickering edition, originally 1820; Pickering 'Diamond Classics' series.

page decorations: decorated extra title page, steel engraving; chapter head decorations, wood engravings.

publication price: 6 s.

[ms annotations]: [ownership inscription, front free endpaper "W. Venables."] ; [ownership inscription, front pastedown "M. H. C. Sh-t-."]

dimensions: 92 × 51 × 12 mm.

binding series: 'Diamond Classics'.

binding designer: unidentified.

binder: George Pickering: London.

printer: C. Corrall: London.

materials: reddish-brown [PANTONE 4635] fine-weave sized cotton cloth over card; spine with 1 [10 × 10 mm] buff paper label onlay.

front cover: without decoration.

spine: label with black-stamped rules, and titling 'Horatius. | Opera. | 6 s.'.

rear cover: without decoration.

endpapers: buff paper [matching text].

edges: all edges uncut.
Mason, William. The English Garden: A Poem, in four books, : by
William Mason, M.A. : with a memoir of the author.
London : Jones & Company, 1825.

issue / series: originally London : R. Horsefield, T. Cadell, G.
Riley, H. Denoyer ; York : W. Tessyman, 1772 ;
Jones’s Diamond Poets’ series.

illustrations: frontispiece and decorated extra title page, steel
engravings with tissue guard, by R. Page.

advertisements: 8 pp. publisher’s advertisements at front.

publication price: 2 s.

dimensions: 94 × 54 × 10 mm.

binding series: ‘Jones’s Diamond Poets’.

binding designer: unidentified.

printer: Andrew & John M. Duncan : Glasgow.

materials: dark blue [PANTONE 546] moiré silk over card ;
spine with 1 [29 × 10 mm] black paper label onlay.

front cover: without decoration.

spine: label onlay with gold-printed rules, and titling
‘Mason’s | English Garden. | 2 s. silk.’.

rear cover: without decoration.

cdnpapers: yellow coated paper.

edges: all edges gilt.

variants: later series issues in ribbon-embossed silk.
Novum Testamentum Græcum.

issue / series: First Pickering edition; Pickering 'Diamond Classics' series; printed in Diamond (6 pt.) Greek type.

illustrations: frontispiece, steel engraving by W. H. Worthington after painting by Leonardo Da Vinci.

page decorations: title page vignette, wood engraving.

advertisements: 8 pp. publisher's advertisements at rear.

publication price: 6 s.

[ms annotations]: [ownership inscription, front free endpaper "Josephine A Ryan"].

dimensions: 89 × 49 × 28 mm.

binding series: 'Diamond Classics'.

binding designer: unidentified.

binder: George Pickering: London.

printer: C. Corrall: London.


front cover: without decoration.

spine: label with black-stamped rules, and titling 'Novum Testamentum Græcum'.

rear cover: without decoration.

endpapers: buff paper [matching text].

edges: all edges uncut; unopened.

- **issue / series:** 'Jones’s Diamond Poets’ series.
- **illustrations:** Vol. 1. with frontispiece and decorated extra title page, steel engravings with tissue guard, by Stalker & Neele.
- **advertisements:** each volume with 4 pp. publisher’s advertisements at rear.
- **publications price:** 6 s. 6 d.
- **dimensions:** 94 × 55 × 15 [14] mm.
- **binding series:** 'Jones’s Diamond Poets’.
- **binding designer:** unidentified.
- **binder:** unidentified.
- **printer:** Andrew & John M. Duncan: Glasgow.
- **materials:** brown [PANTONE 438] ribbon-embossed straight-grain morocco-grain silk over card; spine with 1 [26 × 15 mm] black paper label onlay.
- **front cover:** without decoration.
- **spine:** label onlay with gold-printed rules, and titling 'Diamond | Poets | Prior. | 2 Vols. | vol. 1. [ii].'
- **rear cover:** without decoration.
- **endpapers:** cornflower blue coated paper.
- **edges:** all edges gilt.
- **variants:** identical to others in 'Jones’s Diamond Poets’ series and 'Jones’s Diamond Classics’ series, including Cottin Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia; Dryden The Poetical Works; others in 'Jones’s Diamond Poets’ series and 'Jones’s Diamond Classics’ series also issued identical in crimson, including Young The Complaint; earlier series issues in moiré silk.


illustrations: Vol. 1 with portrait frontispiece, steel engraving by R. Grave after illustration by R. Morghen.

page decorations: Vol. 1 with decorated extra title page, steel engraving ; chapter head decorations, wood engravings.

advertisements: Vol. 2 with 3 pp. publisher’s advertisements at rear.

publication price: 10 s.

dimensions: 90 × 52 × 14 [14] mm.

binding series: ‘Diamond Classics’.

binding designer: unidentified.

binder: George Pickering : London.

printer: C. Corrall : London.

materials: reddish-brown [PANTONE 478] vertical fine-ribbed sized cotton cloth over card ; each spine with 1 [14 × 14 mm] buff paper label onlay.

front cover: without decoration.


rear cover: without decoration.

endpapers: buff paper [matching text].

dges: all edges uncut ; unopened.

issue / series: probably issued *circa* 1825; *Jones's Diamond Poets* series.

illustrations: frontispiece, steel engraving with tissue guard, by R. Cooper.

publication price: 4 s.

dimensions: 94 × 55 × 14 mm.

binding series: *Jones's Diamond Poets*.

binding designer: unidentified.

printer: Andrew & John M. Duncan: Glasgow.

materials: crimson [PANTONE 195] ribbon-embossed straight-grain morocco-grain silk over card; spine with 1 [26 × 15 mm] black paper label onlay.

front cover: without decoration.

spine: label onlay with gold-printed rules, and titling 'Diamond Poets. Young's Night Thoughts.'.

rear cover: without decoration.

endpapers: cornflower blue coated paper.

edges: all edges gilt.

variants: identical to others in *Jones's Diamond Poets* series and *Jones's Diamond Classics* series; others in *Jones's Diamond Poets* series and *Jones's Diamond Classics* series also issued identical in purple, including Cottin Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia, [Dryden] *The Poetical Works*, [Prior] *The Poetical Works*; earlier series issues in moiré silk.