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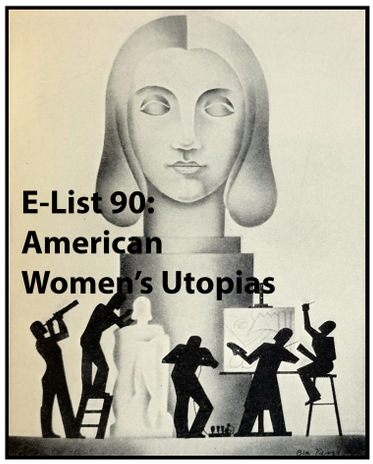
Capitol Hill Books



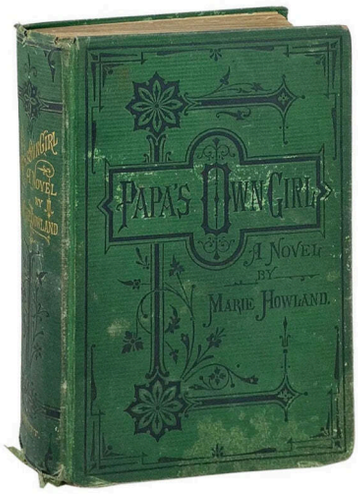
Dear friends and colleagues,

Find below twenty-one American utopian fictions written by women, but not necessarily *for* women. Ranging from matriarchies (nos. 7 and 21), to equality for all manner of human (nos. 1 and 5), to utopias slouching toward failure, for better or for worse (nos. 11, 12, and 14), the majority of these works place women as the instigators or investigators of utopian hopes. This list also includes a signed first edition of *The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia* by Ursula K. Le Guin, known for her subversion of the usual sci-fi tropes (no. 20). Carol Farley Kessler's second edition of *Daring to Dream: Utopian Fiction by United States Women Before 1950* lists most of the first editions of these works in her appendix. As always, thanks for looking!

Best,
The gang at Capitol Hill Books, ABAA/ILAB

P.S. Check out our latest e-lists here:
E-List 87: Secretaries, Stenographers, and Personal Assistants
E-List 88: New Arrivals in Black Studies
E-List 89: September Miscellany

A quintessential feminist utopian text



1. Marie Howland

Papa's Own Girl

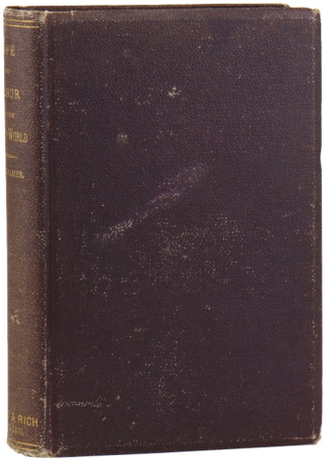
New York: John P. Jewett, 1874. First Edition. Octavo (20cm); publisher's decorative boards with gilt lettering to spine; 547pp. Boards roughly worn with fraying, short tears, and brief exposure to extremities, general chewing and scuffing. Many gatherings sprung and one attached by a single thread, front board gives a little but binding otherwise holding and pages unmarked. A Good to Very Good copy.

Enormously popular and influential utopian novel at the time of publication, now mostly forgotten. The author Marie Howland (1836-1921) drew upon her own experiences as a child cotton mill worker, teaching in Five Points, Manhattan, and living in a Fourierist community in France to write this work, a withering critique of class and gender norms in mid 19th-century America. Howland's radical ideas—communitarianism, socializing domestic work, and economic independence for women—struck a chord with a public weary of the industrial order. Though nearly forgotten today, the novel was still influential almost twenty years after its publication, Elizabeth Cady Stanton remarking that she "would rather be the author of *Papa's Own Girl* than the mother of half the children of America" (*Woman's Tribune*, May 1892). An important utopian feminist text, today quite scarce in retail.

Carol Farley Kessler, *Daring to Dream: Utopian Stories by United States Women: 1836-1919*. Boston: Pandora Press, 1984; p. 253
Wright 1290
Buhle 101

Price: $1,000

Equality in death



2. M.T. [Mary Theresa] Shelhamer

Life and Labor in the Spirit World: Being a Description of Localities, Employments, Surroundings, and Conditions in the Spheres

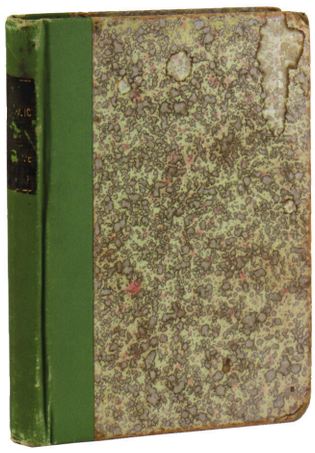
Boston: Colby & Rich, Publishers, 1885. Second Thousand. Octavo (19cm); beveled pebbled purple cloth boards with spine stamped in gilt; brown endpapers; 430pp. Light wear and scuffing to boards; front hinge starting but binding sound; pages unmarked; Very Good.

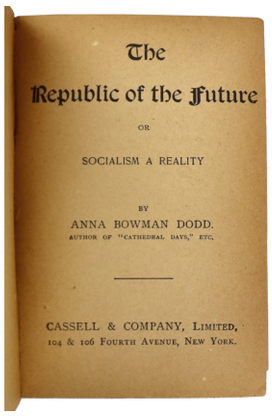
A spiritual fantasy relayed to the medium M.T. Shelhamer from Katie Ammidown Kinsey, who died in Milton, Indiana in 1877. The work relays in detail a future afterworld centered around the city of Zencollia in which stands a massive Temple of Learning dedicated to science, literature, metaphysics, and music. This world helps unlock human potential "whether belonging in an earlier life someone common or uncommon; female or male; black, Indian, or serf. Instructional methods and co-operative societies provide strategies for improving the lives of all," (Kessler, p. 240). Uncommon in retail.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, p. 255

Price: $200

Dystopian socialism





The
Republic of the Future
OR
SOCIALISM A REALITY
BY
ANNA BOWMAN DODD.
AUTHOR OF "CATHEDRAL DAYS," ETC.

CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED,
104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

3. Anna Bowman Dodd

The Republic of the Future; or, Socialism a Reality

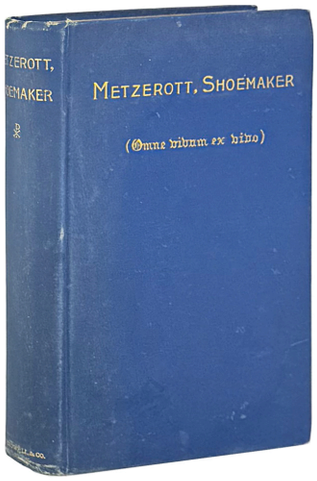
New York: Cassell & Company, Limited, 1887. First Edition. 12mo (14cm); green cloth-backed boards with black title label to spine; 86pp. Edgewear and bumping to boards; patchy staining; heavy rubbing to spine. Exposure to joints but binding holding; pages toned but unmarked; a Good to Very Good copy.

Dodd's alternative future imagines a New York Socialistic City in December 2050, following a 1900 revolution. Per Kessler, "Though women now perform only two hours of domestic work, still foreign courts so dislike contact with female arbitrators that the latter concede rather than negotiate!" A more conservative dystopian work published one year before Edward Bellamy's hugely successful *Looking Backward*. According to Henry C. Adams' review, the work is largely a straw man argument against socialism, "It is bright, in good style, and full of pleasing imagination; but for an argument it is too full of imagination." No copies in retail at the time of this writing.

References:
Henry C. Adams, Book Review in *Science*, Aug. 19, 1887, Vol. 10, No. 237, p. 92
Kessler, *Daring to Dream* pp. 240, 256

Price: $400

"His shoes were not fancy shoes..."



4. Anonymous [Katharine Pearson Woods]

Metzerott, Shoemaker

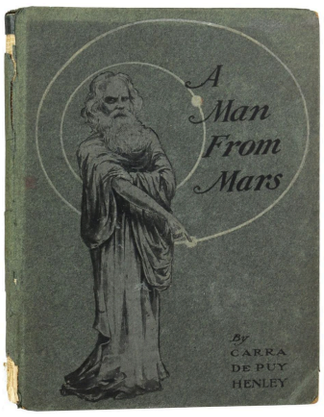
New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1889. First Edition. Octavo (19.5cm); blue publisher's cloth binding with title stamped in gilt; 373 pp. Boards soiled with corners and edges rubbed; some fraying. Mild soiling to boards. Corners bumped with brief exposure. Front hinge cracked. Ownership inscription in pencil on front flyleaf: "W. Laurin Hutchinson, Jr., Christmas 1914." Pages otherwise clean and unmarked. Overall a Very Good copy.

Explores themes of non-violence and socialism. "Metzerott goes berserk when when the local mill cuts wages...[he leads] strikers in an attack on the mill owner and becomes an eye-witness to the death of his own son in the subsequent riot." (Blake, *The Strike in the American Novel*, p. 216).

Kessler, *Daring to Dream* p. 257
Wright 3, 6088

Price: $125

Overcoming the patriarchy and gravity



5. Carra Depuy Henley

A Man From Mars

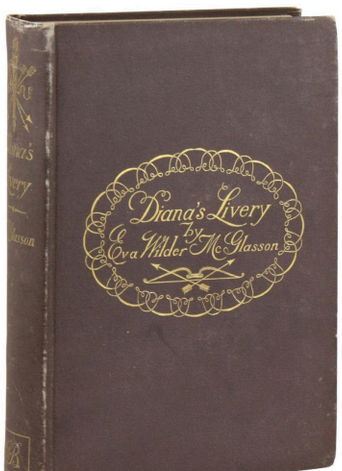
Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt & Co, 1891. First Edition. Octavo (18cm); Boards in gray pictorial paper with a stern bearded man on front cover; [14],66,[1]pp. Frontis and title page on plate paper. Board extremities bumped and rubbed with loss to spine ends and mild scuffing to covers; bumped at bottom corner; shadow of shelf partner at front cover; boards slightly bowed. Endsheets offset from glue and mild toning throughout; small rippled hole to pages 39/40 at bottom corner (from an aggressive finger-lick-page-flick, perhaps?), otherwise interior relatively clean. Scarce and Good to Very Good example.

Kessler's *Daring to Dream* lists the publication as 1901 in book form, though OCLC listings note 1891 as on the copyright page with matching characteristics. Henley died young, at 35 years old, and this was her only publication. The story is the account of an asylum resident who gains clairvoyant abilities after an accident and has visions of Mars, where men and women are equal and have overcome the force of gravity. Spoiler alert, they won't let him out of the asylum at the end because "Decidedly, he is crazy." Flying and women's rights? Preposterous.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, p. 258
Sargent p. 64

Price: $450

A despondent toast to celibacy



6. Eva Wilder McGlasson

Diana's Livery

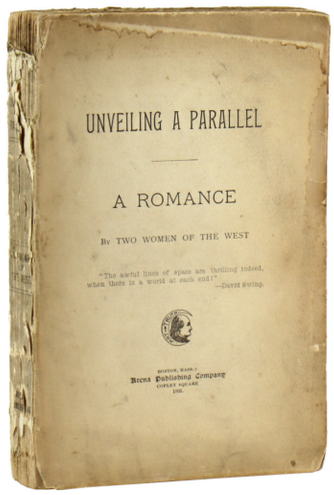
New York: Harper & Brothers, 1891. First Edition. Octavo (19cm); fawn brown boards with gilt stamping and decoration; [4],286+2ads. Board extremities rubbed and lightly worn with mild bumping and superficial scratching overall. Endsheets offset but pages clean. First pastedown starting some at bottom of gutter and title page coming away some at the top of gutter, otherwise binding tight. A Very Good or better example.

Eva Wilder McGlasson Brodhead's first and best known work. A utopian Shaker community in rural Kentucky that becomes less than ideal for the majority of the members as they turn to alcohol or worse to quell their despondency over their celibate lives.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream* p. 258

Price: $75

Women are from Mars



7. Two Women of the West [Alice Ilgenfritz Jones and Ella Merchant]

Unveiling a Parallel: A Romance

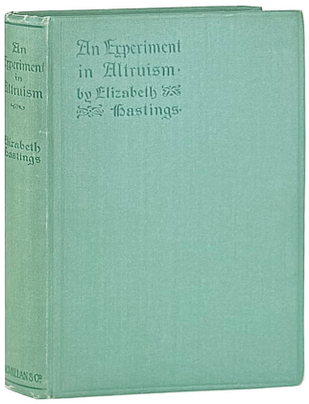
Boston, MA: Arena Publishing Company, 1893. First Edition, presumed wrapper issue; a flawed copy with wrappers perished. Octavo (21 cm); disbound with remnants of wraps to spine; 269pp+ads. Staining and soiling; minor chipping; brief splits to joints; heavy exposure along spine; binding holding soundly and interior unmarked; a Fair copy.

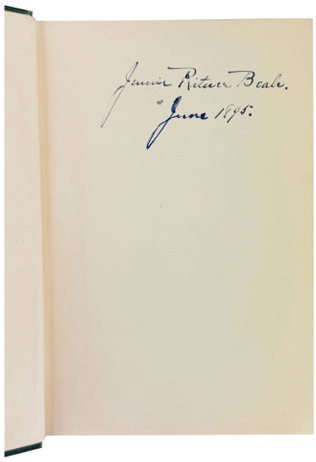
A pioneering work of Feminist Science Fiction, *Unveiling a Parallel* follows a nameless male narrator as he travels to Mars and encounters a society in which women vote and hold positions of power in business and politics. Women are liberated sexually and socially – the narrator falls in love with Elodia, who belongs to a drinking club, smokes, patronizes male prostitutes, and, to his horror, is raising an illegitimate child. Bleiler sums the work up as "Feminist thought in the form of science-fiction, concentrating mostly on equal economic rights and the sexual double standard." This first edition with author attribution only to "Two Women of the West;" the pair were living in Iowa at the time. Rare in any state with no copies in retail or auction records; an important and overlooked work.

References:
Bleiler, Early Years, 2214
Duangrudi Suksang. Review of *Unveiling a Parallel*, Syracuse University Press Edition, 1991, in *Utopian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1993), pp. 143-145
Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, p. 259

Price: $400

An altruistic fix





8. Margaret Pollack Sherwood; [pseud. Elizabeth Hastings]

An Experiment in Altruism

New York: Macmillan and Co., 1895. First Edition. Octavo (18cm); publisher's blue cloth binding with light gray topstain; vi, 215pp+[4]ads. Cloth toned on spine; corners bumped; light rubbing. Spine cocked. Binding sound. Pages clean and unmarked. Overall, a Very Good copy.

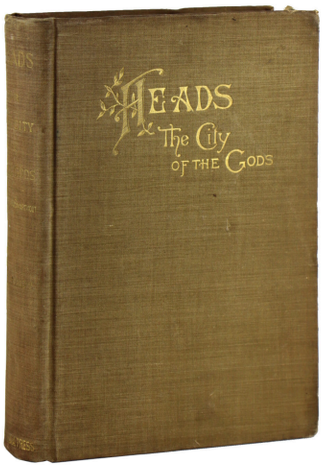
Contemporary owner's inscription on title page: "Jeannie Ritiner Beale, June 1895." Possibly belonged to Jeannie R. Beale, a 1896 graduate of Wellesley College. Author Margaret Pollack Sherwood taught at Wellesley from 1889 until her retirement in 1930, so Beale may have been Sherwood's student.

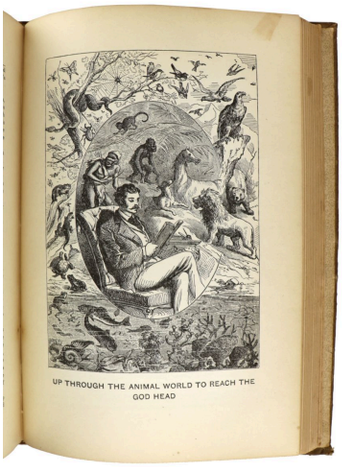
"A woman narrates an abstract tale of a group pursuing altruistic goals with slow progress yet perseverance. Spiritual alternative" (Kessler, p. 260).

References:
Wright 3. 4914
Wellesley College Archives, Papers of Margaret P. Sherwood, 1883-1956

Price: $200

No money, no problems





9. Janet Von Swartwout

Heads; or, The City of the Gods: A Narrative of Olombia in the Wilderness

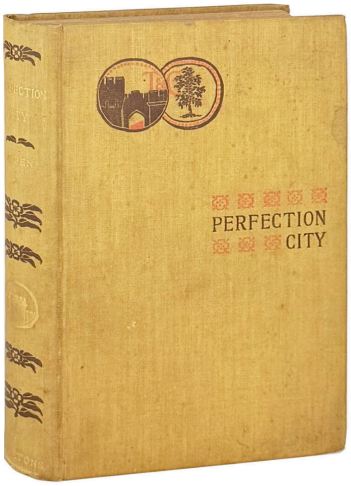
New York: Olombia Publishing Company, 1895. First Edition. Large octavo (22.5cm); tan cloth boards stamped in gilt; floral endpapers; illustrations; 520pp+[4]ads. Light wear and bumping to extremities with brief exposure; minor soiling and spotting; exposure to hinges but binding holding soundly; pages unmarked.

A communitarian alternative in which a group of four men and four women travel through the Adirondacks to search for truth and a "new order of builders" for the general good. Notably published by Olombia Publishing Company, presumably run by Janet Von Swartwout and her husband William who worshipped the god Olo and strove to abolish money; we find no other titles under this imprint though two other Olombian works by William are mentioned here in the rear advertisements. No copies in retail at time of this writing.

References:
Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, pp. 243, 260
"New York's Quota in a Universal Olombian Seance: Dr. von Swartwout Tells How to Eliminate What Does Not Exist." *The Evening World*: Wednesday, December 21, 1892, p. 2

Price: $600

Less than perfection



10. Mrs. [Adela Elizabeth] Orpen

Perfection City

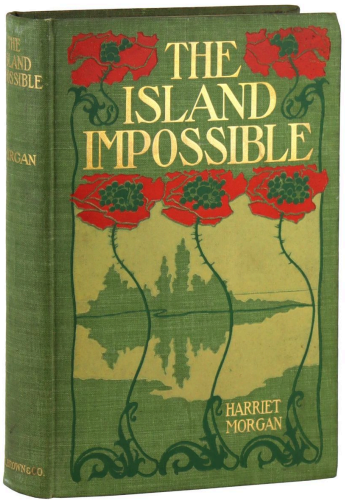
New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897. First Edition. Octavo (18cm); tan cloth boards stamped in red and black; dark topstain; 310pp+ads. Mild shelfwear and moderate spotting to boards; slight lean but binding sound; old dampstaining along bottom edge but text unaffected; a Very Good copy.

Born on a slave plantation in Virginia, Orpen and her father eventually moved to the free state of Kansas, which would serve as the setting for this work, in which Eastern settlers arrive in a commune established by Mme. Morozov-Smith. Perfection City is first hailed as an "earthly paradise" but eventually "the city disbands as villagers realize that not the ways of the world but 'the human heart needed reforming first of all.'" Orpen herself had moved to Ireland in 1867 after her father inherited an estate, though her experiences in Kansas clearly tugged at her memory, as she wrote this novel and a memoir, *Memories of the Old Emigrant Days in Kansas, 1862–1865*, in 1926. Uncommon in retail.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, pp. 244, 261
Dictionary of Irish Biography

Price: $150

A child's paradise



11. Harriet Morgan; Katharine Pyle [illus.]

The Island Impossible

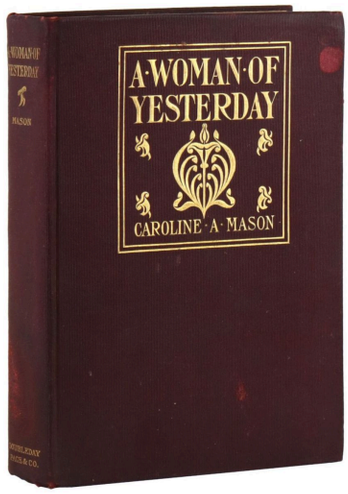
Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1899. First Edition. Octavo (19cm); boards bound in illustrated green cloth; gilt stamping at spine; 206pp. Lacks jacket. Five full-page illustrations throughout. Boards a bit bumped and smudged; rear panel shows a few small stains. Binding sound. Textblock, endsheets, and interior pages lightly toned with a few instances of foxing. Very Good or better.

Young adult novel in which characters travel to an island believed to be uninhabitable, but is perfectly suited for children. There, they build a functional alternative society where they enjoy equality and autonomy not afforded to them in the world of adults. Inevitably, the characters age—a change they find “abominable”—and eventually depart the island.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, p. 262

Price: $250

Faint feminism



12. Caroline A. Mason

A Woman of Yesterday

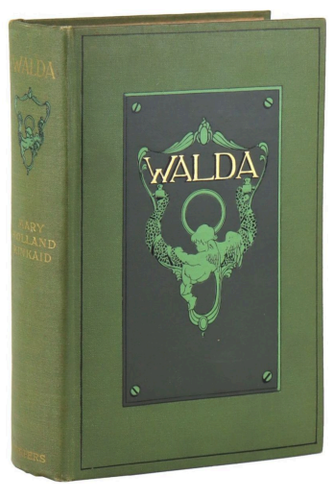
New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1900. First Edition. Octavo (20cm); Boards bound in burgundy cloth with gilt stamping to front panel and spine; 367pp. Lacks dust jacket. Boards bumped and scuffed with some discoloration throughout. Binding sound. Textblock and endsheets toned and foxed; interior pages toned with a few instances of dampstaining. Nevertheless Very Good.

Turn-of-the-century novel about a woman who joins an egalitarian community in North Carolina called Fraternia in order to escape a loveless marriage. By the end of the novel, she relocates to India and works as a schoolteacher. An early work by Caroline Atwater Mason (1853–1939), a novelist and travel writer. Despite *A Woman of Yesterday*'s faint feminist undertones, Mason was a card-carrying member of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, p. 262

Price: $100

Rebellious in love



13. Mary Holland Kinkaid

Walda

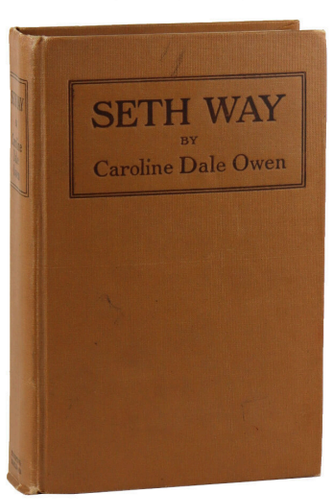
New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1903. First Edition. Octavo (19cm); Boards in green cloth with pictorial embossing in gray, black, green, and gilt; [3],311,[1]pp. Boards gently rubbed and bumped at extremities with sunning to spine and superficial scratches to covers and page edges. Binding slightly cocked but firm. A Very Good or better copy.

Author and suffragist Mary Holland Kinkaid's first novel following the prophetess Walda who leads the school of a religious colony and defies the rules of the commune to follow her heart and an alluring stranger.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, pp. 245, 263
Sargent p. 66

Price: $150

A utopian Manifest Destiny



14. Caroline Dale Owen [Mrs. Charles H. Snedeker]; Franklin Booth [illus.]

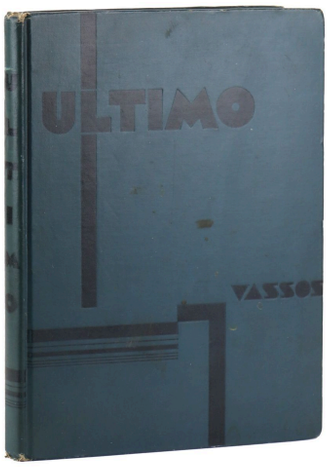
Seth Way: A Romance of the New Harmony Community

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company / The Riverside Press Cambridge, 1917. First Edition. Octavo (20 cm); brown cloth boards stamped in dark brown; 413pp. Color frontis with tissue guard. Mild edgewear; a few smudges and stains; binding sound and pages unmarked. A Very Good copy of this historical romance set at Robert Owen's egalitarian community in New Harmony, Indiana, which strove to be a secular paradise on Earth. Uncommon in retail.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream* pp. 248, 269

Price: $100

Subterranean sci-fi



15. Ruth Vassos; John Vassos [illus.]

Ultimo: An Imaginative Narration of Life Under the Earth

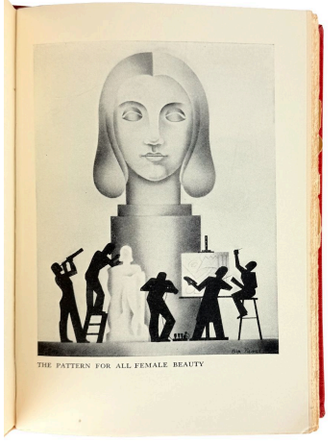
New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1930. First Trade Edition. Quarto (26cm); lacks dust jacket; boards bound in blue cloth with black stamping to front panel and spine; 21 full-page illust; unpaginated. Boards bumped. Binding sound. Textblock, endsheets, and interior pages toned; first free endsheet shows smudging. Former owner's bookplate at first pastedown. A little less than Very Good.

Ultimo imagines a future in which earth has become so inhospitable to humans that they must retreat beneath the surface of the earth. In this subterranean civilization, social conventions like marriage become foreign and scientific progress accelerates. Over time, inhabitants' curiosity grows and a group develops a spaceship-like device that will deliver passengers to the surface of the earth. Text accompanied by striking art deco- and cubist-style illustrations by the author's husband, industrial designer John Vassos.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, p. 273

Price: $150

Last woman standing



16. Susan Ertz; Bip Pares [illus.]

Woman Alive

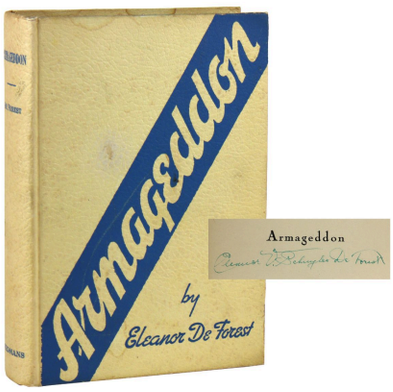
New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936. First US Edition with (1) on final leaf of text. Octavo (19.5cm); publisher's cloth in Art Deco pictorial dust jacket; six leaves of halftone plates; [6],219pp. Shallow chips and closed tears to jacket, some creasing to flaps, two small holes in cloth along bottom edge of rear board, corners bumped, else a Very Good, bright and sound example in the beautiful and rare jacket.

The Anglo-American author's only science fiction novel, part of a slew of philosophical and literary sci-fi works which came out of the UK in the mid-1930s: *Brave New World*, *Odd John*, *The Star Maker*, etc. Ertz takes the "last man in the world" trope and flips it on its head, portraying the post-Communist world of 1985 where advances in science unleash a deadly plague that kills all of womankind. The planet is thrown into a dystopian spiral of hopelessness until the last woman alive is discovered and put on display as a sort of living goddess. Illustrated with six plates by the prolific Art Deco book designer Bip Pares, at the time also working on the iconic London Transport poster designs that made her name.

The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (1995), p. 387

Price: $1,250

Anti-feminists awaiting the Anti-Christ



17. Eleanor De Forest

Armageddon: A Tale of the Antichrist [Signed]

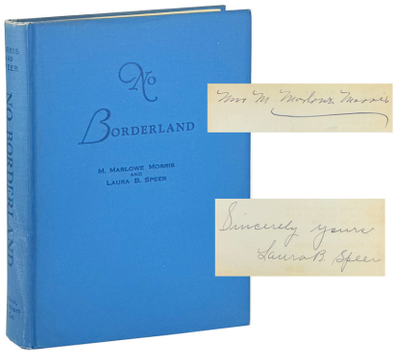
Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1938. First Edition. Octavo (20cm); lacking dust jacket. Cream textured boards with blue stamping; 219pp. Boards lightly soiled with mild wear, scuffing, and water staining. Board fore-edges nibbled at bottom. Page edges mildly soiled but interior clean. A Very Good copy.

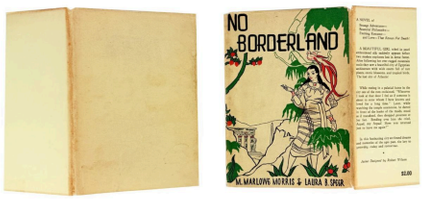
Signed by De Forest at the half title. A story of an anti-Semitic and anti-feminist dystopia set in both California and Palestine where twin sisters compete to survive while awaiting the arrival of the antichrist.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, p. 274

Price: $75

Agrarian Atlantis





18. M. Marlowe Morris and Laura B. Speer

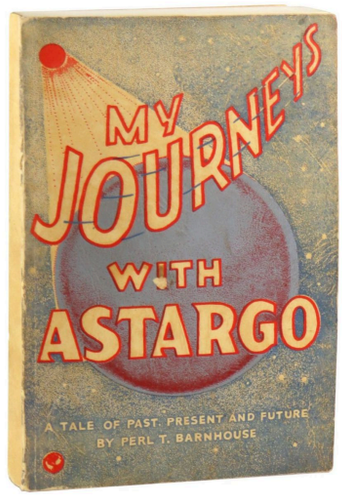
No Borderland [Signed]

Dallas, TX: Mathis, Van Nort & Co., 1938. First Edition. Octavo (20 cm); blue cloth boards stamped in navy; 269pp. Remnants (front and rear panels) of dust jacket included. Shelfwear to boards; spine toned and scuffed; binding sound; bookseller ticket (Schmalzried Book Shop of Dallas, Texas) to rear pastedown; a Very Good copy.

Signed by both Morris and Speer at front free endpaper with brief inscription. Atlantean utopia where "the borders exist between lives, times, and states in this exotic adventure, where past prefigures future as two male archaeologists explore," (Kessler, p. 274). No copies in retail at time of this writing and we locate nine holdings in OCLC.

Price: $400

"Methinks now that the only Utopia I know is Perfecto."



19. Perl T. Barnhouse

My Journeys With Astargo

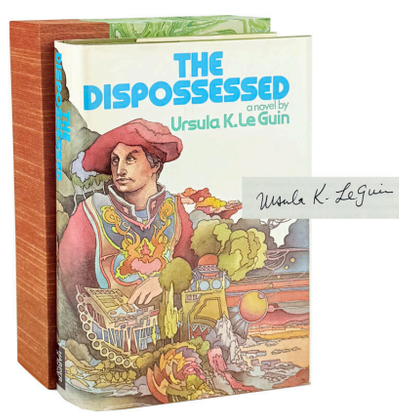
Denver, CO: Bell Publications, 1952. Presumed First Edition with no additional printings indicated. Octavo (21cm); publisher's illustrated wrappers; staple-bound; 212pp. Wrappers bumped and scuffed. Binding sound. Textblock and endsheets a bit toned and foxed; interior pages clean. Brief inscription in blue ink at first free endsheet. Very Good or better.

Science fiction novel in which two men travel the galaxy on a spaceship called Astargo. They happen upon a utopian planet called, perhaps a bit eye-rollingly, Perfecto, where conditions improve with each passing year. Scarce in retail.

Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, p. 275

Price: $150

Signed First Edition of Le Guin's ambiguous utopia



20. Ursula K. Le Guin

The Dispossessed: An Ambiguous Utopia [Signed]

New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974. First Edition, stated and with full number line to rear. Signed by Ursula Le Guin without inscription at title page. Octavo (22cm); green cloth-backed boards stamped in gilt; illustrated dust jacket with $7.95 price intact; 341pp. Touch of rubbing to boards; very slightly cocked; binding sound and pages unmarked. Mild rubbing to edges of dust jacket; a Near Fine copy. Housed in a custom-made slipcase.

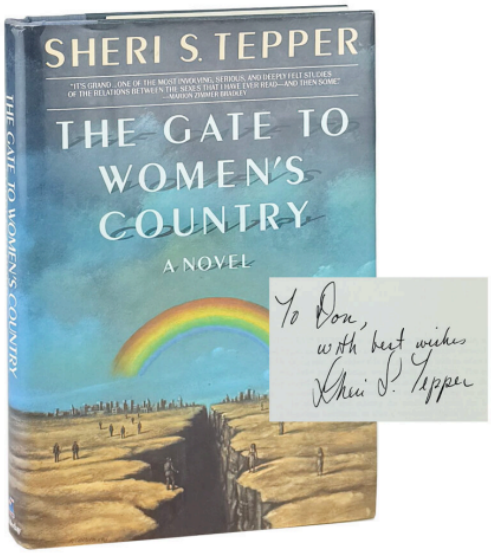
Le Guin's most lauded novel—winning the Hugo, Locus, Nebula, and Prometheus Awards—her anarchist ambiguous utopia explores political systems, gender roles, and class conflict. Ambitious in content and form, Kessler notes that Le Guin's story "demonstrates the possibility of reconciling contradictory concepts of time—as both linear and circular: the novel completes a circle by ending where it began with the convergence of two linear plot lines."

In *Dictionary of Literary Utopias*, the authors praise the novel's "complex literary, philosophical, and political construction," noting that "Le Guin challenges the idea of utopia itself and sets the basis for what has been called the 'critical utopia'—an imperfect utopia in progress that, by questioning the very notion and convention of the genre, revitalizes it." Signed copies are becoming increasingly scarce in retail.

References:
Fortunati & Trousson, *Dictionary of Literary Utopias*. Paris: Honore Champion, 2000; pp. 174-176
Kessler, *Daring to Dream*, pp. 257, 281

Price: $3,500

No Man Land



21. Sheri S. Tepper

The Gate to Women's Country [Signed]

New York: Foundation Books Doubleday, 1988. First Edition. Signed by Sheri Tepper at p.[v] with brief inscription to previous owner. Octavo (24 cm); blue cloth-backed boards; bright yellow endpapers; illustrated dust jacket; 278pp. Shelfwear to boards; binding sound; rubbing to edges of unclipped dust jacket; Near Fine.

Set 300 years in the future and following a catastrophic nuclear war, *The Gate to Women's Country* portrays a world in which women and nonviolent men have created a matriarchal society populated by cities such as Marthatown focused on raising children, feeding the people, and cultivating the lost biological sciences. Meanwhile, men live in garrisons outside the limits of Women's Country, waging war and plotting insurrection. An early-career high spot from Tepper; signed copies uncommon in retail.

Price: $200

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