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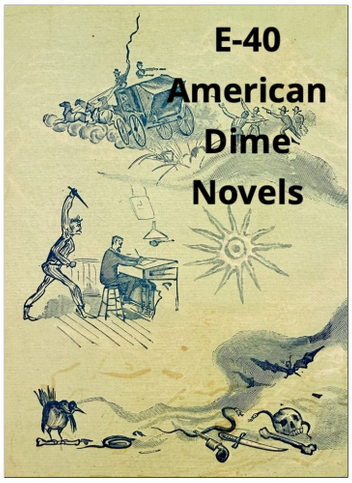
Capitol Hill Books

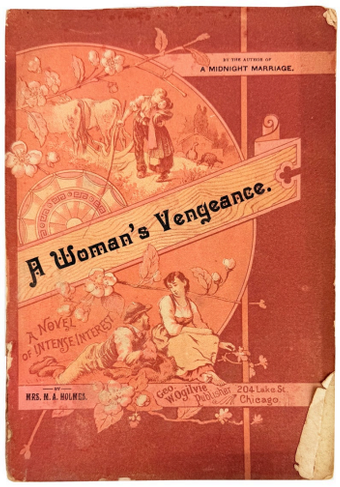


Dear friends and colleagues,

Dime novels! With the rise in American literacy rates and the forty-hour work week came the need to produce inexpensive books for an omnivorous reading public. The formula is much the same one from volume to the next: vibrant, appealingly designed and illustrated wrappers, the cheapest kind of paper available, and as many advertisements as can fit on all available blank surfaces. The present list is a tiny drop in the dime novel bucket but represents all that the market had to offer: not just the classics like R.L. Stevenson's perennial favorite *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (no. 11); but also crime novels (nos. 9 & 13); Westerns (no. 16); romance (nos. 3, 10, 17); and instructional manuals and cookbooks (nos. 7 & 8). We think it worth noting that the list also includes novels by pillars of the dime novel market: Mette Victoria Fuller Victor, Mrs. Murdoch E. Van Daventer, E.D.E.N. Southworth, and Charles Garvice, who, between the four of them, wrote approximately a gazillion-billion books, all of them more or less forgotten. Until now!

Best,

The gang at Capitol Hill Books, ABAA/ILAB



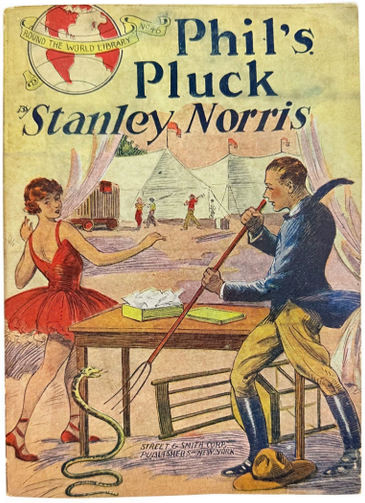
1. Mrs. M. A. Holmes

A Woman's Vengeance

Chicago: Geo. W. Ogilvie, 1886. First Edition. Octavo (19cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; 215pp. Wrapper margins a bit chipped and rubbed, one-inch loss at spine foot, textblock toned as usual, else a Good to Very Good copy.

"A novel of intense interest" by the author of other irresistibly-titled potboilers like *A Midnight Marriage* and *Woman Against Woman*.

Price: $30



2. Stanley Norris

Phil's Pluck

New York: Street & Smith Corporation, [1903]. First Edition. Octavo (18cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; 314,[8]pp. Wrappers a bit worn, brief dark staining to spine, textblock significantly toned and brittle due to inferior paper quality, else Very Good and sound. Issued as Round the World Library no. 46.

Action-packed adventure novel set in a traveling circus—kidnapping, romance, and wrappers fashionably adorned with the illustration of a handsome young ringmaster fending off a snake with a pitchfork while his crimson tutu-clad paramour makes her escape from the tent. "The dealer who handles the Street & Smith Novels is a man worth patronizing. The fact that he does handle our books proves that he has considered the merits of paper-covered lines, and has decided that the Street & Smith Novels are superior to all others" (from the rear wrapper publisher's ad). Probably some of the worst writing we have ever encountered, which, having splashed around in the waters of Wright fiction for more than a decade, is saying something.

Price: $50

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3. Jean Corey

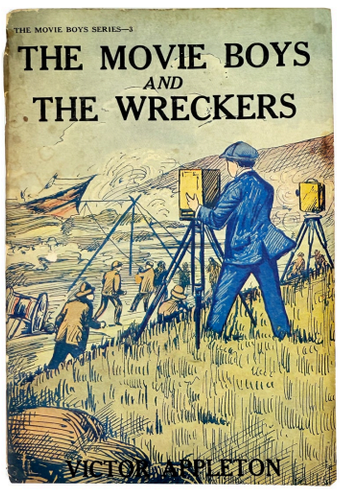
A Heart of Fire

Chicago: M.A. Donohue & Company, 1893. First Edition. Octavo (18cm); publisher's white pictorial wrappers; 184,11,[1]pp.; illustrated ads. Light wear and foxing to wrappers (more heavily spotted on rear cover), textblock uniformly toned, else Very Good and sound. Advertisement for eye ointment on title page verso.

Uncommon romance dime novel with spooky elements—a beautiful heroine, a crime of passion, and some very awful plagiarizing of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* ("Here's the smell of blood still! All the perfume of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand!" (p. 160)).

Two copies in OCLC as of February, 2025, at Bowling Green and Villanova.

Price: $100



4. Victor Appleton [pseud. of the Stratemeyer Syndicate]

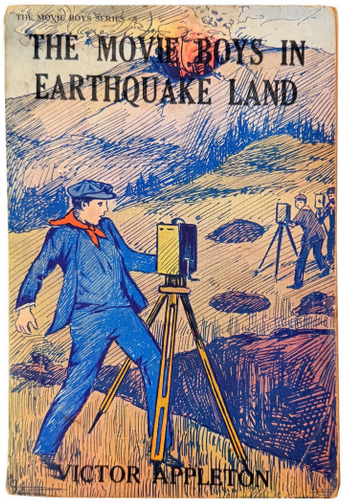
The Movie Boys and the Wreckers or, Facing the Perils of the Deep

Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing Company, 1926. First Edition in presumed later issue wrappers. Octavo (18.5cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; [2],212,[10]pp. Moderate wear and soil to wrapper, textblock significantly browned due to poor paper quality, else Very Good.

The Movie Boys series no. 3, a popular monthly serial for young readers about a group of boys traveling about making documentary films, in this case of the men attempting to bring in a shipwreck. The works were written by the far-reaching Stratemeyer Syndicate, who also wrote the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, and Tom Swift series. This copy presumably in a later issue of the wrappers, which advertises the series through seventeenth volume, *The Movie Boy War Spectacle*, published in April, 1927.

Two copies in OCLC as of February, 2025, at the NYPL and U. South Florida.

Price: $60



5. Victor Appleton [pseud. of the Stratemeyer Syndicate]

The Movie Boys in Earthquake Land; or, Filming Pictures Amid Strange Perils

Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing Company, 1926. First Edition in presumed later issue wrappers. Octavo (18.5cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; [2],214,[8]pp. Moderate wear to wrapper extremities, rear cover a bit soiled with small hole towards spine edge not touching text, textblock significantly browned due to poor paper quality, else Good to Very Good. The Movie Boys series no. 5.

Price: $50

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6. Walter T. Gray [pseud. Metta Victoria Fuller Victor]

The Bad Boy at Home

New York: Butler Brothers, n.d. [ca. 1890s]. Octavo (18cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; 140, [4]pp.; illustrated advertisements on final two leaves and rear wrapper. Moderate wear and spotting to wrappers, textblock quite toned, else Very Good and sound. Forms part of the Electric Series. Adorned with advertisements for a myriad of products: irons, wristwatches, the sensible safety pin, violin strings, harmonicas, swan's-down powder (don't ask), rubber combs, and building blocks.

Comic novel by the hugely prolific and popular author Metta Victoria Fuller Victor (1831-1885), pioneer of the dime novel and detective story. This edition not in OCLC as of February, 2025.

Price: $30

7. Juliet Corson

Wehman Bros.' New Family Cook Book [alt. title: Juliet Corson's New Family Cook Book]

New York: Wehman Bros., 1908. Octavo (18cm); publisher's white pictorial wrappers printed in blue; [2],280,[5]pp.; illustrated advertisements bound in rear. Wrappers rather chipped and worn with losses along upper wrapper margins slightly touching text without loss of meaning, textblock exceedingly toned and brittle due to inferior paper quality, title page separated but present with small contemporary Library of Congress rubber-stamp to verso. A Good copy.

First published in 1887 as *Juliet Corson's New Family Cook Book*, this edition co-opted by the publishers as something uniquely their own. No copies of this edition in OCLC as of February, 2025.

Price: $50

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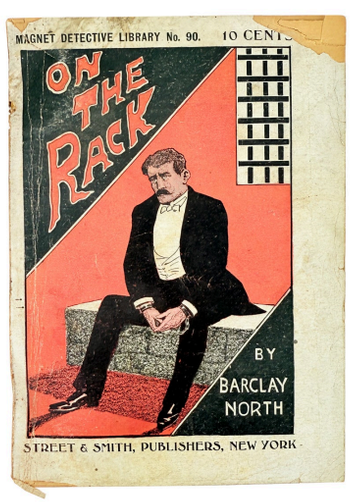
8. [Byron David Halsted and George A. Martin]

Homemade Contrivances for Farm and Garden, Dairy and Workshop. How to Make Over 1,000 Handy Appliances and Labor-Saving Devices Needed on the Farm or About the Buildings [Three volumes in one]

Chicago: Orange Judd Company, 1899. First Thus. Three volumes bound in one; octavo (18.5cm); publisher's pictorial card wrappers; 256,vi,[7]-192,vi,[7]-192pp.; illus. throughout. Wrappers a bit worn and rather soiled, especially along spine and rear wrapper spine edge, textblock brittle and browned due to inferior paper quality, else Very Good and sound. Compendious volume includes the following titles:

1. *Farm Conveniences: A Practical Hand-Book for the Farm*. 1897
2. *Farm Appliances. Practical Manual*. 1887
3. *Fences, Gates and Bridges. Practical Manual*. 1899

Price: $150



9. Barclay North (W.C. Hudson)

On the Rack: A Novel

New York: Street & Smith, [1899]. Octavo (18cm); publisher's white pictorial wrappers; [4],283, [1]pp. Wrapper margins a bit chipped and worn with loss at top edge of upper cover slightly affecting text without loss of meaning, moderate soil, textblock toned and brittle due to inferior paper quality, else Good to Very Good.

Crime novel re-issued here as part of Street & Smith's Magnet Detective Library no. 90. Advertisement for Hall's Vegetable Sicilian Hair Renewer adorns rear cover.

U. South Florida and Princeton only in OCLC as of February, 2025.

Price: $75

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10. Annie Henri Wilson

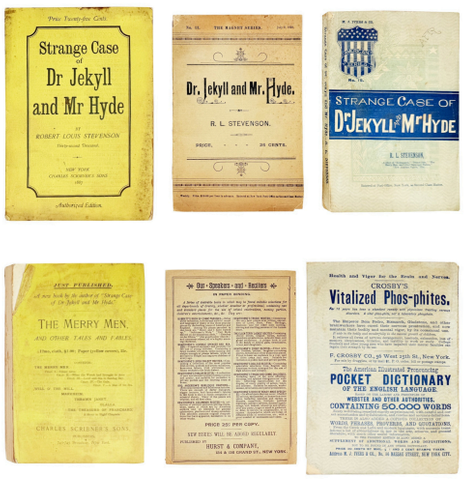
Mr. Mercer of New York: A Novel

New York: G.W. Dillingham Co., 1896. First Edition. Octavo (18.5cm); publisher's buff pictorial wrappers printed in blue; 256pp. Wrappers a bit worn and quite toned, significant spine lean, leaves a bit roughly cut along fore-edge, else Very Good and sound.

Rare dime novel set in rural North Carolina where the titular Mr. Mercer retires from the world. As described by one contemporary reviewer, "It was here that he ran across a girl, refreshingly sweet and innocent, who appealed to his fancy, and who was later given to him by her poor and illiterate old parents to do with as he pleased." A bizarre and rather upsetting premise for a romance novel, "told in a fearless way [that] takes the lax morals of to-day's society people for granted" (*Kansas City Journal*, Aug. 24, 1896).

Library of Congress only in OCLC as of February, 2025.

Price: $150



11. Robert Louis Stevenson

Collection of Three Nineteenth-Century American Wrapper Editions of Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

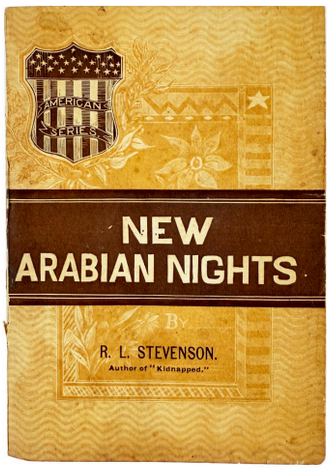
New York: v.p., 1887-1892. Three volumes (described below). Moderate wear and soil including brief chipping to margins not approaching text, textblocks all quite toned due to inferior paper quality, else a Very Good, sound collection comprised of the following editions:

1. *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887. "Authorized Edition," Thirty-second thousand. Small octavo (18.5cm); publisher's yellow printed wrappers; [8],138,[14]pp.

2. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. New York: M.J. Ivers & Co., n.d. [ca. 1888]. Small octavo (18.5cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers printed in pale green and blue; [2],67,[3],120pp. Pirated edition bound with the author's novella *Prince Otto: A Romance*. Issued as American Series no. 15. UT Austin only in OCLC as of February, 2025.

3. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. New York: Hurst & Co., 1892. 12mo (18cm); publisher's decorative wrappers; [2],67,[1],[209]-243,[5]pp. Pirated edition bound with *Autobiography of a Thief*. Issued as No. 13 of the Magnet Series, July 2, 1892. No copies separately catalogued in OCLC as of February, 2025.

Price: $500

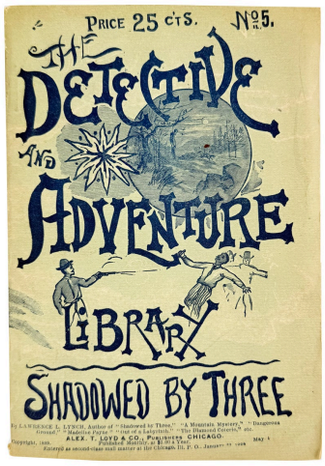


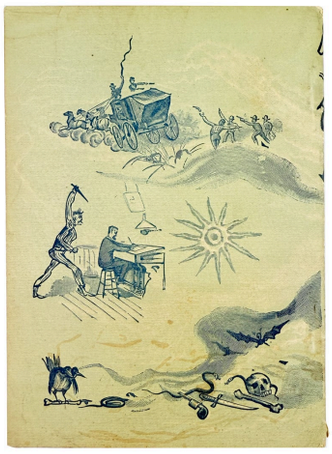
12. R[obert] L[ouis] Stevenson

New Arabian Nights

New York: M.J. Ivers & Co., n.d. [ca. 1886]. Octavo (18.5cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; [2],227,[3]pp. Light wear and toning to wrappers and textblock, brief soil to upper cover, else Very Good and sound. Issued as part of the publisher's American Series. This edition not located in OCLC as of February, 2025.

Price: $75





13. Lawrence L. Lynch [pseud. Mrs. Murdoch E. Van Daventer]

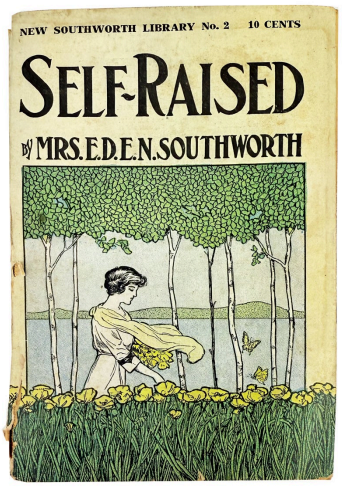
Shadowed by Three

Chicago: Alex. T. Loyd, 1889. Octavo (18cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; [3],10-670,[4]pp. (complete despite error in pagination); pictorial publisher's ads in rear. Moderate wear to wrapper margins, rear cover slightly soiled, textblock toned, else Very Good and sound. Issued as The Detective and Adventure Library no. 5.

Scarce re-issue of this popular crime novel by Lawrence L. Lynch ("ex-detective"), pseudonym of Mrs. Murdoch E. Van Daventer. "Not even the creator of Sherlock Holmes can boast so large a circulation, for more than a million copies of Lawrence L. Lynch's books have been sold" (*Liverpool Mercury*, Jan. 17, 1900).

OCLC locates one copy of this edition as of February, 2025, at UCLA.

Price: $150



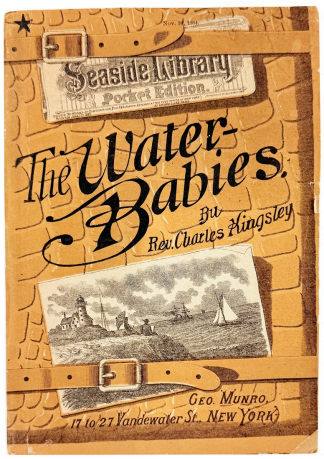
14. Mrs. E.D.E.N. [Emma Dorothy Eliza Nevitte] Southworth

Self-Raised; or, From the Depths

New York: Street & Smith Corporation Publishers, n.d. [ca. 1900]. Octavo (18cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; 320pp. Moderate wear to wrapper margins, bottom two inches of upper cover spine edge starting to split, textblock quite brittle and toned, else Good to Very Good. Published as the New Southworth Library no. 2.

Sequel to the novel *Ishmael, or In the Depths* by the most successful living female author of her day.

Price: $30



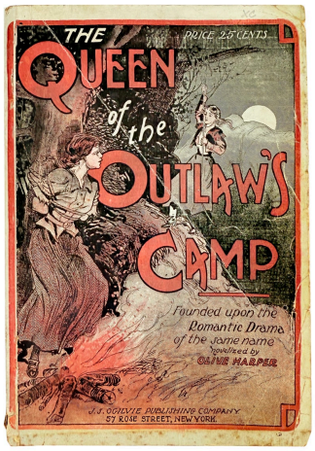
15. Charles Kingsley

The Water-Babies: A Fairy Tale for Land Babies

New York: George Munro, [1887]. Octavo (18cm); publisher's pictorial wrappers; [2],122,[10],8,[2]pp.; illustrated advertisements bound in rear. Light wear and chipping to wrapper margins, textblock uniformly toned and brittle due to inferior paper stock, else Very Good and sound. Issued as part of the publisher's Seaside Library Pocket Editions. Upper cover printed with two different dates of publication: Nov, 16, 1884, and June 7th, 1887.

No copies conforming to this edition in OCLC as of February, 2025.

Price: $25



16. Oliver Harper [pseud. Ellen Burrell D'Apery]

The Queen of the Outlaw's Camp: A Thrilling Romance of the Rocky Mountains, Developed from the Drama of the Same Name

New York: J.S. Ogilvie Publishing Company, 1909. First Edition. Octavo (18cm); publisher's white pictorial wrappers; 118,[42]pp. Moderate wear to wrappers, faint crease across upper cover, textblock quite toned, else Very Good and sound.

Western adventure play by Edward M. Simonds novelized here by the popular dime novelist Olive Harper (1842-1915). Upper cover strikingly adorned with an illustration of the titular Queen swinging from a rope tied to a branch in order to save another young woman tied to a tree, a campfire licking at her legs.

Two copies in OCLC as of February, 2025, at Ohio State and U. Wisconsin.

Price: $150

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17. Charles Garvice [a.k.a. Caroline Hart]

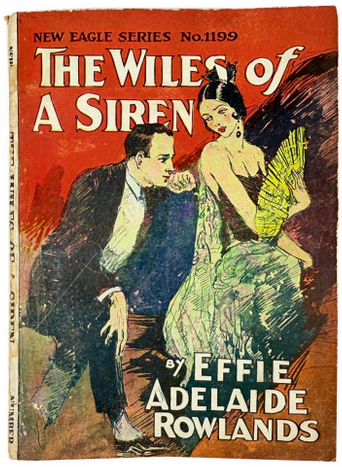
My Love Kitty

New York: Arthur Westbrook Company, 1912. Octavo (18cm); publisher's color pictorial wrappers; 304,[16]pp.; pictorial publisher's ads bound in rear. Moderate chipping to wrapper extremities including shallow loss along the top margin of upper cover slightly touching text, textblock significantly browned due to inferior paper quality, else Very Good and sound. Issued as Hart Series no. 103.

Romance novel by the English powerhouse Charles Garvice (1850-1920). With the rise of the dime novel the author managed to churn out more than 150 formulaic romances relatively late in his career, as many as twelve in a year, all dictated to his secretary. "Garvice embraced those possessed of pennies rather than shillings" and the year after the publication of *My Love Kitty* showed the "largest sales of any one in the world": 1,750,000 in 1913 alone. See the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography for more information.

This edition not in OCLC, though we find a Street & Smith printing at U. Minnesota.

Price: $20



18. Effie Adelaide Rowlands

The Wiles of a Siren; or, Good and Bad

New York: Street & Smith Corporation Publishers, [copyright 1905-1906]. First American Edition. Octavo (17.5cm); [2],254pp. Moderate wear to wrappers, spine panel soiled, textblock uniformly toned due to inferior paper quality, else Very Good and sound. Issued as New Eagle Series no. 1199.

Stylish dime romance novel by Effie Adelaide Rowlands (ca. 1859-1936), the English author of approximately a gazillion novels.

U. Minnesota and New Mexico State only in OCLC as of February, 2025.

Price: $75

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