

Books and Manuscripts (1706)

May 20, 2021 EST, Freeman's

Lot 42

Estimate: \$500 - \$800 (plus Buyer's Premium)

[Literature] Wilde, Oscar Autograph Envelope

Chelsea, S.W., London, May 7, 1881. Envelope, inscribed by Wilde to Margaret Raine Hunt, novelist and mother of British author and literary hostess, Violet Hunt: "Mrs. Hunt/1, Tor Villas/Campden Hill". Envelope printed by London stationer, J. Macmichael; opened, without letter. Lot includes an unrelated architectural sketch.

Margaret Raine Hunt (1831-1912) was a best-selling British author, translator of the tales of the Brothers Grimm, wife of Pre-Raphaelite landscape painter Alfred William Hunt (1830-96), and mother of literary hostess and author, Violet Hunt.

Violet Hunt (1862-1942) was the author of numerous novels, but is most remembered for the literary salons she hosted in her family home, South Lodge, in Campden Hill, in South Kensington, London, which attracted eminent writers such as Rebecca West, Ezra Pound, Joseph Conrad, Wyndham Lewis, D.H. Lawrence, and Henry James. She caught the attention of a young Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) around 1879, when she was 16 and he was 25. As she writes in her memoir, *Flurried Years* (1926), "I believe that Oscar was really in love with me – for the moment and perhaps more than a moment for Alice Corkran told me quite seriously that he had said to her quite seriously, 'Now, shall I go to Mr. Hunt and ask him to give me little Violet?'" Oscar apparently proposed to Hunt in Dublin in 1879, but she declined. They remained correspondents for some time after.

