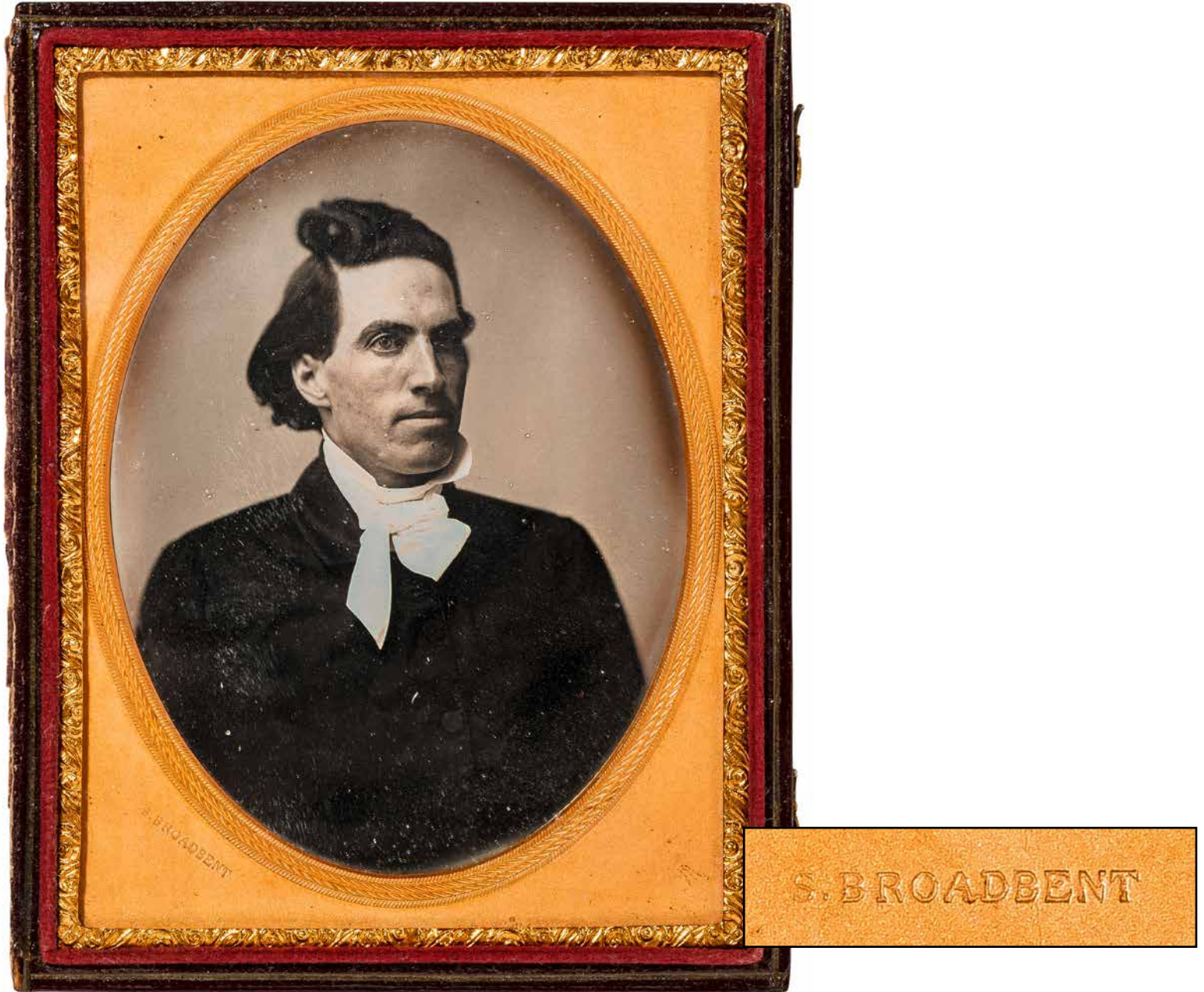


S. Broadbent

Daguerreotype of Reverend Richard Salter Storrs Dickinson

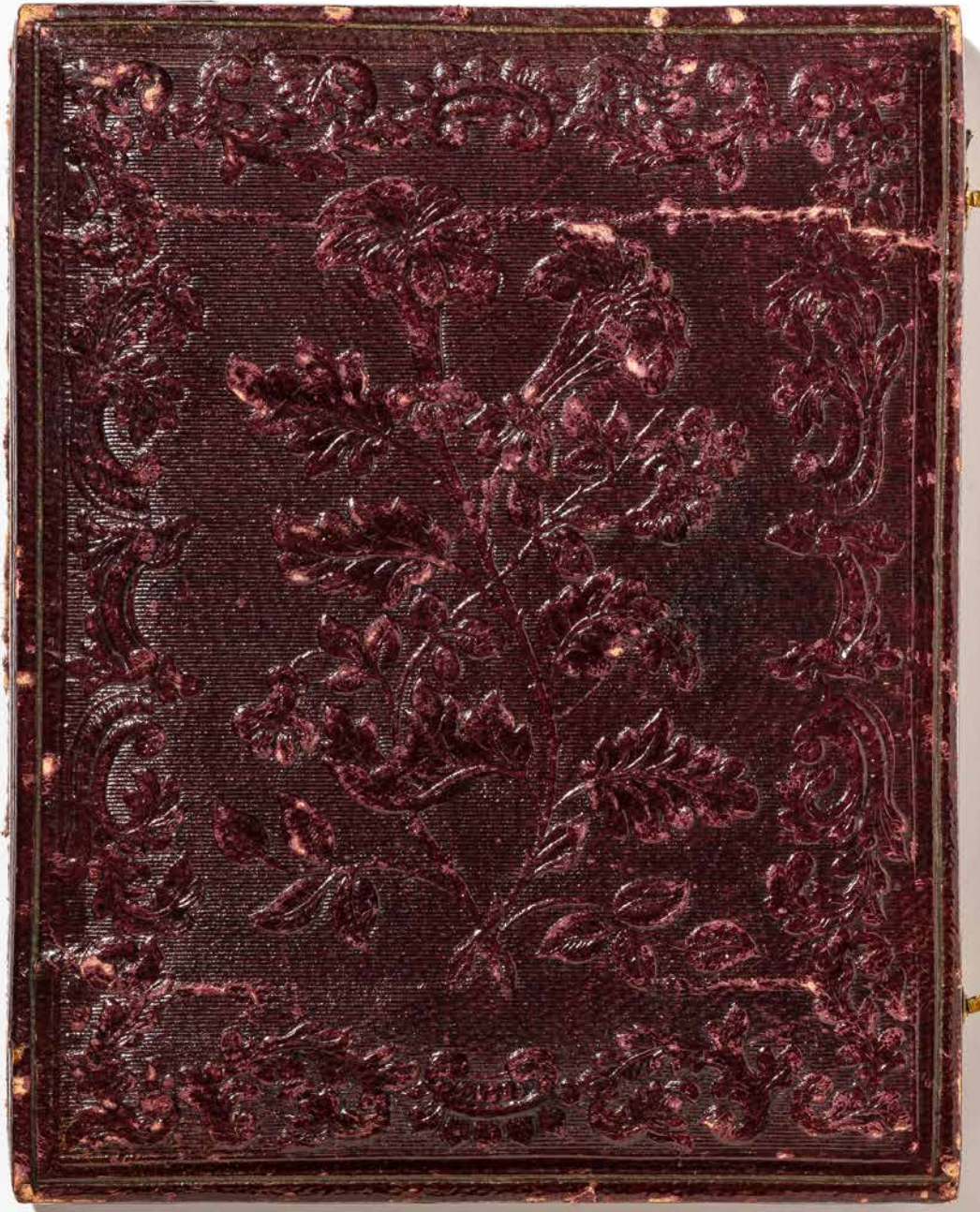
[Philadelphia: Samuel Broadbent circa 1853]

\$4500



Portrait of Reverend Richard Salter Storrs Dickinson (1824-1856), fifth cousin once removed of poet Emily Dickinson. Eighth plate daguerreotype. Measuring 3¾" x 4¾". Housed in a maroon leather hinged case with two brass clasps, a maroon velvet interior, and gold foil matte. The image was taken by Samuel Broadbent, a photographer and portrait painter in Philadelphia, with his "S. Broadbent" mark clearly visible on the mount. The case is lightly rubbed and the hinge has separated; the plate has a touch of darkening at the upper edge of the image and scattered pinpoint sized imperfections, mostly at the lower part of the plate. The sharp and fresh image shows Rev. Dickinson in the high collar and stock of a clergyman and with a dramatic upswept quaff and a touch of red hand tinting added to his cheek.

Rev. Dickinson was born in Longmeadow, Massachusetts, the eldest son of Reverend Dr. Baxter and Martha Dickinson. He graduated from Amherst College in 1844 and Union Theology in 1848 before moving to Philadelphia to become the assistant of Rev. Albert Barnes at the First Presbyterian Church from 1853-1855. It was likely during this period that he sat for this daguerreotype. Rev. Dickinson married Margaret Shippen McIlvaine of Philadelphia on September 8, 1855 but tragically died at age 32 from a ruptured aorta while in Edinburgh, Scotland on August 28, 1856, just two weeks shy of his first wedding anniversary.



Rev. Dickinson was a cousin to Emily Dickinson but it appears his interaction with her has been largely unrecorded despite his younger brother William Cowper Dickinson being a correspondent of the poetess, though author Dorothy Waugh suggests otherwise in her book, *Emily Dickinson's Beloved*. In that book Waugh explores the mystery surrounding the "Master Letters" - three unmailed love letters written by Emily to an anonymous recipient referred to only as "Master" - that were discovered after her death. Waugh posits the idea that Rev. Dickinson should be considered as a potential candidate based on several clues found in the letters that point to him, including a trip Emily took with her sister to Philadelphia in 1855. Despite the intriguing notion no further evidence has emerged.

Daguerreotypes are by their nature unique, that is each exposure yielding only a single image, and the process was all but abandoned once images could be reproduced from paper negatives. We have tracked only one other image of Rev. Dickinson, a carte de visite from around the same time period, and can find no other examples. This is a striking and charming daguerreotype of a tragic figure from within the circle of Emily Dickinson. [BTC#423421]