

THE ROYAL PICK

English firsts, Roman law and Scottish garb

IN THIS DAY of the Internet and online selling, I am still amazed by the number of printed catalogues that are mailed out from, mostly, the top booksellers in the business, and in nearly all cases they still have bookshops that you can enter to “feel the goods.” Earlier this year I was again in England and managed to attend a book auction and visit several fine bookshops.

R.A. Gekoski, Pied Bull Yard, 15a Bloomsbury Square, London: catalogue 32 is a small slim catalogue with all items in fabulous condition. For instance, item #31, *Tropic of Cancer*, by Henry Miller, Obelisk Press, Paris, 1934. This first edition has covers that are slightly rubbed, nicked and soiled and has repairs to its spine, but is otherwise a perfectly reasonable copy of an increasingly scarce book, in a cloth solander box, at £13,000. Item #35 is *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell, Secker & Warburg, London, 1945. This second impression inscribed by George to Arthur Koestler is a nice copy, in a near fine dust wrapper, in collector’s box, at £22,500.

Dominic Winter Book Auctions, South Cerney, near Cirencester had an auction of printed books and maps. It featured a fair collection of sporting books with emphasis on cricket, such as item #1162, *Wisden’s Cricketers’ Almanack*, 1916, original printed wrappers with minor spotting and a rubbed spine. Probably the rarest of all Wisden’s almanacs printed during the Great War, this sold for £560 plus buyer’s premium, whereas earlier copies were selling in the range of £95 to £200. Item #943, Somersetshire Maps, four small early and unusual maps by John Bill, Pieter van den Keere, Robert Morden and J. Luffman, sold for £1,000 plus buyer’s premium. Only after talking to a map dealer did I understand the significance of these scarce little maps.

Henry Sotheran Limited, 2 Sackville Street, London: *Children’s and Illustrated Books* catalogue, item #74, *Lyrics Pathetic and Humorous A to Z Portfolio*, illustrated by Edmund Dulac, London; Frederick Warne, publisher, 1909, original brown cloth-covered box with original ribbon-pull containing 24 folio fine coloured plates tipped-in on mounts. A rare and near fine complete set, one of 160 such sets, at £3,750. Also item #177, *Cinderella* by C.S. Evans, illustrated by Arthur Rackham, quarto with

the original green dust wrapper. This is the first edition deluxe, limited to only 850 numbered copies and signed by Rackham in ink, printed on handmade paper, at £1,350.

Maggs Bros Ltd., 50 Berkeley Square, London: catalogue 1405, *Continental Miscellany*, item #2, an incunabulum leaf from *Historiae Romane decades* by Titus Livius, Rome, Conrad Sweynheim & Arnold Pannartz, 1469, folio, 46 lines, roman letter with double columns. A leaf from the edition princeps of the history of Livy, from the first press established in Rome, by the first printers to establish a press in Italy (Swehnheim & Pannartz began printing in Subiaco in 1465 and moved to Rome in 1468), at £250. Also item #62, a legal manuscript detailing law cases and precedents written in Latin, English and legal French. Written in London towards the end of the 16th century. Manuscript on paper, small octavo with 176 leaves. This is a notebook of an unknown practising lawyer with dates given by regnal year. The reign of Elizabeth I is referred to and the manuscript continues on to year 41 of her reign (i.e., 1599), at £750.

Nicholas Goodyer, Highbury Fields, London: catalogue 76, recent acquisitions, item #111, *The Works of William Hogarth, from the Original Plates Restored by James Heath... Biographical Essay... Explanation of the Subjects...* by John Nichols, Baldwin & Cradock, London, no date (circa 183-). Large folio, binding broken, complete with 116 copper-engraved plates, water stain throughout one margin, but with good impressions of the plates, at £1,400. Also item #258, *The Costume of the Clans with Observations upon the Literature, Arts, Manufactures of the Highlands and Western Isles during the Middle Ages, and on the Influence of the 16th, 17th, 18th Centuries upon Their Present Condition*, by John Sobieski Stolberg Stuart and Charles Edward Stuart, Edinburgh, 1892. A large and substantial folio in publisher’s red three-quarter morocco with seven lithographs and 29 finely hand-coloured plates of Scottish men’s costume, including the much-reproduced plate of a child playing golf. A reissue of the 1845 edition. Deluxe and limited to 500 copies. A fine copy from the library and with the bookplate of Hugh Trevor-Roper, Lord Dacre, the distinguished historian, statesman and academic. Priced at £1,950.

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