USE BOOKS AS BEES USE FLOWERS
Tell us the books that you love and for what reasons; do not content yourselves with simple affirmations; look for the causes.

— Adrienne Monnier
[DESIGN]. Lithographic art calendar. Czechoslovakia: 1977 or 1983. Spiral-bound wall calendar, measuring 15 x 9.5 inches. Pictorial cover lithograph printed in metallic gold and silver inks on black paper; twelve pictorial lithographs in color and metallic inks, printed on rectos only, with printed calendar for each month below. $850.

Color lithographed Czechoslovak art calendar, a wordless work of science fiction, featuring themes of robots, circuitry, rockets, and computers. The futuristic themes explored in these lithographs have a rich history in Czech modernism. The word “robot” was invented in Prague, when Karel Capek’s science fiction play *R.U.R.*, subtitled “Rossum’s Universal Robots,” premiered at the National Theater in 1921. Zdenek Sýkora, who taught in Prague from the 1960s through the 1980s, was a global pioneer in the use of computers in art, and fellow members of the Krizovatka group of artists rebelled against the socialist realism endorsed by the state to explore the “new nature” of technical civilization. In 1978, Czechoslovak cosmonaut Vladimir Remek became the first from a country other than the United States and the Soviet Union to explore space. From stark saturated diagrams of circuitry, probably copied from actual devices, to geometric machines floating in the dark, these lithographs have a dream logic all their own. The calendar corresponds to a common year beginning on Saturday, January 1, and ending on Saturday, December 31. The dates, combined with the images of analog circuit boards dating from the 1970s, narrow the likely year to 1977 or 1983. A compelling unrecorded artifact of the early days of modern computing.
Gustave Flaubert; [James Joyce]. Madame Bovary. Paris: Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1900. Modern red buckram, publisher’s wrappers bound in, signed by James Joyce on front wrapper and front free endpaper (1901), signature of Irish critic Ernest Boyd to front free endpaper. Front wrapper chipped and mounted, early repairs to front free endpaper and rear wrapper. $25,000.

James Joyce’s personal copy of Flaubert’s novel of “provincial manners,” one of the most controversial and influential novels of the nineteenth century, first serialized in La Revue de Paris in 1856. In the character of Emma Bovary, an unhappy wife ruined by her romantic aspirations, Flaubert projected his own struggle with the challenges of realism: “Madame Bovary, c’est moi.” Flaubert was, in fact, prosecuted for his heroine’s adultery, but was acquitted; his obscenity trial made the novel a bestseller when it appeared in book form early in 1857. This paperback édition définitive, which includes transcripts of the Bovary trial, bears Joyce’s early ownership signature, dated June 1901, when he was nineteen. The Bovary trial strikingly prefigures the legal challenges to Joyce’s Ulysses, another work featuring a complicated, unapologetically unfaithful wife. When the decade-long American ban on Ulysses was finally overturned in 1933, Joyce wrote to T.S. Eliot that Random House was publishing Judge Woolsey’s decision in the first American edition: “I suppose like the édition définitive of Madame Bovary.”

Gustave Flaubert; [James Joyce]. L’Éducation Sentimentale. Paris: Bibliothèque-Charpentier, 1901. Modern red buckram, publisher’s rear wrapper bound in, signed by James Joyce on half-title (1901). Front wrapper missing; half-title torn with loss, with early tape repairs to verso. $15,000.

James Joyce’s personal copy of Flaubert’s great bildungsroman, intended as the moral history of his generation, first published in 1869. The novel follows a provincial young man in Paris, frustrated in his passions and ambitions, drawn back over the years into the circle of a woman he once loved. Ezra Pound, in his review of Joyce’s A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, noted that “Joyce produces the nearest thing to Flaubertian prose that we have now in English.” Stephen Dedalus, hero of that Joycean bildungsroman, quotes Flaubert nearly word for word: “The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.”

Provenance of both volumes: James Joyce to unknown owner(s) to Ernest Boyd to Thomas Quinn Curtis to Alexander Neubauer. The modern bindings date from Boyd’s ownership; he has signed across the repaired front free endpaper of Madame Bovary. Both volumes are discussed at length in Scarlett Baron’s Strandtwining Cable: Joyce, Flaubert, and Intertextuality (OUP, 2012). Two great association copies.

Beautifully executed sketchbook of historic ornament, based primarily on artifacts in the Victoria & Albert Museum, containing thirty pages of pencil, ink, and watercolor sketches by English art student Leonard Timson (1879-1936). The range of ornamental details is wide, covering sculpture, ceramic, and stained glass designs, from a sixth-century Coptic frieze, to thirteenth-century Italian mosaics in porphyry and marble heightened with gold, to colorful seventeenth-century Spanish tiles. Most of the designs are marked “S.K.M.” for the South Kensington Museum, formally renamed the Victoria & Albert in 1899: most notably, a fully-finished pen and watercolor painting of the stained glass window “The Adoration of the Magi,” which came to South Kensington from the Cathedral of Cortona in Tuscany. Outside the galleries, Timson records local architectural and sculptural details from Cobham Church in Kent, Fairford Church in Gloucestershire (famous for its stained glass), St. Mary’s in Buckinghamshire, and even, farther afield, the entrance gates to the Antwerp Zoo.

Timson’s style of sketching and his annotations are indebted to the work of Richard Glazier, a member of the South Kensington Circle (along with Owen Jones and Henry Cole), and head of the Manchester Municipal School of Art. Glazier’s 1899 Historic Ornament was the most widely assigned art textbook in England in the early twentieth century, and Timson was clearly immersed in it. His sketchbook imitates Historic Ornament in lettering, layout, shorthand (including “S.K.M.”), and choice of subjects. In the National Art Competition of 1904, while a student at Battersea Polytechnic Institute, Timson won a bronze medal “for his well-executed design for a panel in the Italian Renaissance style,” perhaps inspired by the subjects in this sketchbook; his stained-glass work would later appear in an exhibition at the Royal Academy, and he would pursue a career as a draughtsman.

Toward the end of the sketchbook, Leonard’s daughter Enid Timson (1906-1994), an avocational painter, contributes thirteen pages of her own, including six full-page watercolors, executed between 1952 and 1968. While her work is less accomplished than her father’s, her watercolors of the Ponte Vecchio and other Florentine scenes have their own charm. A remarkable ornamental sketchbook, testifying to the influence of the South Kensington Circle in early twentieth-century art education.
First edition, following tea leaves from their origins in Asia through their conquest of Europe to their role in the colonies: “Do you know about the Boston Tea-Party, where you could have gone for a swim in tea?”

First edition, illustrated by the artists whose hearty “kitchenette tested” recipes are featured. Examples of studio cookery include Berenice Abbott’s bouillabaisse, Beauford Delaney’s gumbo, Pete Seeger’s fried rice, Kenneth Fearing’s paella, Milton Avery’s spaghetti, and Stuart Davis’s deviled crabs.

First edition of this whimsically illustrated midcentury children’s cookbook: “Vegetables cooked properly help make you strong and healthy little men and women. Learn to like them. You can, if you want to, and anyway, it isn’t polite to grumble about your food.”

Paperback reprint of Tillie Olsen’s great collection, first published in 1961, inscribed by Olsen to fellow writer Annie Dillard. All of these stories, including the classic “I Stand Here Ironing,” were featured in Best American Short Stories when they first appeared. Although Tell Me A Riddle fell out of print, the book became a touchstone for a generation of American writers inspired by Olsen’s attention to the interior lives of working people, especially women: “never a direct protest, never rebellion. I think of our others in their three-, four-year-oldness — the explosions, the tempers, the denunciations, the demands — and I feel suddenly ill. I put the iron down. What in me demanded that goodness in her? And what was the cost, the cost to her of such goodness?”  
This copy is warmly inscribed in Olsen’s characteristic microscript: “For Annie Dillard — / In kinship — and in love for your work. / Tillie Olsen / June, 1974.” That same year, Dillard published her first two books: the poetry collection Tickets for a Prayer Wheel, and the personal narrative Pilgrim at Tinker Creek, which won the Pulitzer Prize. A wonderful association copy, linking two original and influential American writers.
Dante: Henry Francis Cary (translator); Sandro Botticelli (illustrator). La Divina Commedia or The Divine Vision of Dante Alighieri in Italian and English. [London]: The Nonesuch Press, 1928. Folio, original orange vellum gilt, 42 collotypes printed in sepia. $1500.

Splendid example of the Nonesuch Dante, one of 1475 copies. The sepia collotypes, many double-page, reproduce a series of drawings that Botticelli produced for his patron, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de’ Medici, in the late fifteenth century. Text in Italian and English.


Nineteenth-century Florentine edition of Petrarch, presented by American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to his daughter Edith to commemorate their shared love of Italian literature: “Before her marriage Edith Longfellow read Dante in the original with her father. This she carried out conscientiously for at least two years, enjoying the association with her father in his work, and he presented to her a volume of Petrarch inscribed in memory of those readings” (Cambridge Historical Society). Text in Italian. A notable family and literary association copy.
Étienne-Gaspard Robert. La Minerve, Vaisseau Aërien Destiné aux Découvertes.  
Second edition of this early work on ballooning, first published in 1804, featuring one of the most fantastical images in the history of aeronautics. Robert proposes a massive scientific airship, hosting a library, laboratory, and fully staffed observatory shaped like a chicken. While no airship remotely comparable to the Minerve was ever built, Robert’s flight of fancy would influence the speculative ballooning fiction of Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne. Text in French.

First edition of this account of the first balloon ascent in England. Lunardi’s feat made him a sensation: “My time is now taken up with the exhibition of the Balloon, and indeed of myself. . . . It is difficult to imagine any thing more pleasing than the solicitude which multitudes of beautiful women express concerning dangers that are past, and the heroism of others who wish to accompany me in my second tour.” Lunardi signed early copies of his book, including this one, to limit piracy.

Adrienne Monnier. La Figure. Paris: La Maison des Amis des Livres, 1923. Quarto, original ivory wrappers, uncut and largely unopened. Inscribed on the half-title: “à Monsieur Ernest-Charles / sincère hommage / Adrienne Monnier / Avril 1923.” With: original photograph of Monnier at work, circa 1925. $500.  
First edition of this collection of poems by Left Bank bookseller Adrienne Monnier, dedicated to the friends of her bookshop, among them Paul Valéry, André Gide, Paul Claudel, James Joyce, and Sylvia Beach. When Monnier opened La Maison des Amis des Livres in 1915, she became one of the first women in France to set up independently as a bookseller. Jules Romains, entering the shop in 1916, recalled meeting Monnier there, “a girl [who] had just entered the service of literature as others decide to enter the service of religion.” It was Monnier who encouraged her friend and lover Sylvia Beach to open Shakespeare & Company across the street, and the two bookshops, one French and one English, made the rue de l’Odéon the center of literary life in Paris between the wars. In her tribute to Beach in La Figure, Monnier invokes the “doux fleuve de soleil qui porte sur ses bords / Nos librairies”: sweet river of sun that bears on its edges / Our bookstores. One of 300 copies. Text in French. A fine inscribed copy, accompanied by a portrait of Monnier in her shop by Paris photographer Henri Manuel.

First edition of this portfolio of etchings by Robert Farren documenting the 1883 Cambridge Greek Play, The Birds of Aristophanes, accompanied by six preliminary pencil sketches for the plates. Acted in the original Greek, The Birds was billed as the first Greek comedy to be produced in its entirety since antiquity. The cast of university students featured a young M.R. James, who would later achieve literary fame with Ghost Stories of an Antiquary, in the lead role of Peithetairus, who convinces the birds to form the ideal commonwealth of Cloudcuckooland.

Robert Farren began his career as a Cambridge photographer, but is best remembered for his paintings and etchings. He published a series of portfolios in small editions, many of them visual records of the Cambridge Greek Plays. His etchings for The Birds document one of the most spectacular of those university performances: “The most arresting aspect of the production was the birds’ beautifully executed costumes: canvas wings, painted with the actual markings and attached to the chiton, could be extended at will; and elaborate headdresses with beaks protruding from foreheads were fashioned from bird-plumage” (Hall and Wrigley). The six preliminary pencil sketches show Farren working out compositional elements in five of the final plates. A compelling firsthand document of a lively moment in Greek and English theater history.

First edition, in the first impression, first issue binding, of Dickens's Christmas classic. Written in a mere six weeks at a low point in Dickens's career, and published at his own expense, A Christmas Carol revived Dickens's fortunes, establishing a robust market for Christmas gift books that survives to this day. The characters of Scrooge and Marley, Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim, are immediately recognizable even to those who've never read a word of Dickens: "'God bless us every one!' said Tiny Tim, the last of all. He sat very close to his father's side, upon his little stool. Bob held his withered little hand in his, as if he loved the child, and wished to keep him by his side, and dreaded that he might be taken from him."

This copy, with the red and green title page and yellow endpapers, appears to be an unrecorded variant: according to Dickens bibliographer Walter Smith, "the priority of green endpapers with this title page is deduced as a matter of logical sequence rather than from any substantial direct evidence. It is not improbable that at some stage in the binding, the use of yellow and green endpapers overlapped." A near-fine, sparkling example of the first edition.


Second separate edition of Sir Philip Sidney’s influential Elizabethan defense of poetry, following the first edition of 1595, in which he argues that the poet has a greater impact on the world than the philosopher or historian: “Anger, the Stoics said, was a short madness; let but Sophocles bring you Ajax on a stage, killing or whipping sheep and oxen, thinking them the army of Greeks, with their chieftains Agamemnon and Menelaus; and tell me, if you have not a more familiar insight into anger, than finding in the schoolmen his genus and difference?”


First and only edition in English of this popular introduction to the iconography of the Greek and Roman gods, first published in Italian in 1556. Drawing not only from the expected classical sources like Homer, Ovid, and Virgil, but also from Renaissance mythographers like Boccaccio, Cartari’s detailed account of the ancient gods provided Tudor artists and writers with “a symbolic vocabulary” (Renaissance Quarterly). Translated, with many additions, by Elizabethan poet Richard Linche. A scarce work, with no auction records recorded in more than thirty years.
Shirley Jackson. “Had We But World Enough.” Spectre. Syracuse University, Spring 1940. Quarto, original wrappers, illustrated. $2200.

Third issue of this short-lived college literary journal, self-published by Shirley Jackson and her future husband Stanley Edgar Hyman. In Jackson’s story, a penniless couple imagine their future: “The hell with you,” she said. ‘You think I’m going to have children and ruin my whole life?’ They laughed. ‘Twenty children,’ he said. ‘All boys.’” Jackson and Hyman would marry shortly after graduation, and raise four children on her earnings as a writer. Known to her neighbors only as “Mrs. Hyman,” the increasingly reclusive Jackson would publish some of the most unsettling fiction ever produced in America, including “The Lottery” (1948), The Haunting of Hill House (1959), and We Have Always Lived in the Castle (1962).


Crime novelist Patricia Highsmith’s first appearance in print, a series of letters written in 1933, when she was twelve, from her all-girls summer camp. “Patsy” exhibits many of the characteristics of precocious city kids: she laments the camp’s refusal to serve her coffee, requests the Sunday comics from the New York papers, and exhibits a certain hard-boiled impatience with her fellow campers’ demands: “Even I know that is ridiculous.” Most interestingly, for the future writer of the pioneering lesbian novel The Price of Salt (1952), are her notes on skinny-dipping: “We are going in swimming ‘Diana’ tonight. Miss Brownie, too. . . . Diana means without any clothes on at all. Do you think it’s all right to go in Diana?”

“E.M.P.” Dwarf Stories. No place, 1888. 12mo, original limp black roan. 69 ink manuscript pages, with six pen and ink illustrations initialed by “E.M.P.” Gift inscription dated Christmas 1888. Housed in a custom clamshell box. $2800.

Original Victorian fairy tale manuscript featuring three illustrated stories of misadventure, starring a spellbound prince, a vengeful fairy, and an overburdened dwarf. In “The Dwarf with the Yellow Nose,” a wicked fairy’s invitation to the palace goes astray, so she curses the infant prince with a yellow nose so monstrous that his royal parents die on the spot. The disfigured baby grows into a good-hearted dwarf until a beggar maid kisses him, revealing him to be the prince, and the maid his destined princess. In the second story, “What Became of the Yellow Nose,” the wicked fairy tries to salvage the prince’s cast-off yellow nose for later use, but ends up accidentally attaching it to her own face, with comic results. In “The Story of the Storm Dwarf,” the narrator encounters a miserable dwarf struggling under the burden of 365 parcels, one for each day of the year, under ominous skies. Rather than carry one parcel each day, the Storm Dwarf insists on tying all the year’s burdens together and lifting them as one. When the narrator divides the parcels, “sorting out the shapeless masses of ‘Supposes,’ ‘Perhapses,’ & ‘Probablies,’” the storm clouds clear. The narrator notes: “I shall have, I fear, to keep a good look out on Jan. 1st 1889, lest my little friend should from old habit, proceed to tie together the whole year’s allowance into one burden & so make the weather of 1889 as cloudy and dull as that of 1888.” This neatly penned manuscript, with its gentle humor and inspirational bent, offers a window into Victorian women’s practices of reading, writing, and giving. A delightful survival.


John Richard Coke Smyth; [Queen Victoria]; [Prince Albert]. Sketches of Costume by Coke Smyth. London: 1842. Two folio volumes, original full green morocco, manuscript titles. 125 original mounted watercolors with penciled annotations. Notes by Queen Victoria on at least three plates, and one full-page group of pencil sketches by Prince Albert, including a self-portrait. $25,000.

Two albums of original watercolors by noted English painter Coke Smyth (1808-1882), a vibrant series of historical costume designs, consulted by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert for inspiration as they planned their Bal Costumé of May 1842 at Buckingham Palace. The 125 costume paintings in these albums are strikingly dynamic and fresh, without sacrificing attention to historical detail. The subjects are primarily European, with the second volume devoted largely to English costume, but there are almost two dozen examples of Greek, Turkish, and Arab dress as well, likely inspired by Smyth’s journey to Constantinople in the 1830s. Three of the English watercolors are annotated in pencil by Queen Victoria: a noblewoman during the reign of Richard III, a nobleman in late fourteenth-century dress, and a scene of two late fourteenth-century women in elaborate headgear. On a blank leaf mounted at the end of the second volume, Prince Albert has sketched three designs for a costume based on Edward III’s effigy in Westminster Abbey, including a recognizable portrait of himself wearing Edward’s crown.

While the royal party did not reproduce in detail any of the historical costume designs proposed by Smyth, their interest in his Plantagenet images appears to have guided their final choices. Victoria dressed as Queen Philippa of Hainault, and Albert as King Edward III (in the costume he himself had sketched), accompanied by members of the royal household in late fourteenth-century dress. Smyth was commissioned to document the costumes at the ball, and those drawings were published in a commemorative folio of hand-colored lithographs entitled Souvenir of the Bal Costumé, given by Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, at Buckingham Palace, May 12, 1842. The Drawings from the Original Dresses by Mr. Coke Smyth.

After the folio’s publication, Smyth pitched his own idea for a color plate book, to be entitled The Costume of the Principal Nations of Europe from the Beginning of the 13th to the End of the 17th Century, based on these historical costume watercolors. Publisher Colnaghi agreed to Smyth’s proposal, and issued a prospectus, but did not attract enough subscribers to make the expensive project viable. These two albums, bound by Colnaghi, remain the only record of Smyth’s vision. A stunning group of original costume watercolors by an accomplished English painter, annotated by Victoria and Albert.
First editions of two scarce historical novels set in Puritan New England, both dealing with themes of romance between Native Americans and white settlers. The Witch of New England depicts only unrequited attraction, but Hobomok, the first novel by abolitionist Lydia Maria Child, features the consensual marriage of a Pequot chief and an English colonist, a plot twist that shocked contemporary readers.

First edition of Harriet Jacobs’s harrowing slave narrative, written under the name of Linda Brent. Inspired by Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Jacobs used the tropes of the sentimental novel to convey the desperate experience of motherhood in slavery. Although she advises readers to “be assured this narrative is no fiction,” historians treated the work as a novel until the 1980s. The contemporary pencil note in this copy, correctly identifying the family of Jacobs’s northern employers, confirms that Linda Brent’s real identity was widely known in her time.

Set of hand-painted wooden figurines representing the pilgrims in Geoffrey Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales, from the “verray parfit gentil Knyght” to the bawdy Wife of Bath to the figure of Chaucer himself, calmly pointing the way ahead.

In 1922, Oxford mapmaker Cecily Peele opened the Alley Workshops, an inventive literary-themed gift shop, with a specialty in “wild and tame toys.” Rod Barron notes: “From advertisements published in the early 1920s, it is clear that the Workshops’ principal target audience was the growing number of financially independent female students.” This complete set of Canterbury pilgrims includes all the characters mentioned in Chaucer’s prologue: At nyght was come into that hostelrye / Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye, / Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle / In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle, / That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde. The portraits are based on the illuminations in the fifteenth-century Ellesmere manuscript of The Canterbury Tales, now at the Huntington Library.
E.B. White. Less Than Nothing — or The Life and Times of Sterling Finny.

First and only edition of E.B. White’s first book, a pitch-perfect series of comic advertisements for *The New Yorker*, published in-house as a giveaway to friends and advertisers of the magazine. Founded in 1925 by Harold Ross and Jane Grant, *The New Yorker* aimed to be “a reflection in word and picture of metropolitan life,” a smart modern magazine “not edited for the old lady in Dubuque.” Writing anonymously, young staff writer E.B. White epitomized *The New Yorker’s* style of humor in this series of short features about a young couple of astonishing stupidity, Sterling Finny and his wife Flora.

Deftly parodying the melodramatic “halitosis style” of advertising, in which a seemingly trivial oversight leads to personal disaster, White describes ten scenarios in which Sterling and Flora are saved from social death by a regular reading of *The New Yorker*. “Perhaps you, too, have failed at a summer colony because you left everything to your gorgeous body. Have you ever been spoken of in whispers as ‘the man with a physique only’? Why can’t you realize that there is an easy way to avoid all this — simply by having your copy of *The New Yorker* sent to your summer address?” Each of the ten advertisements is illustrated with a photograph of the striving couple, played by a pair of mannequins that White borrowed from Wanamaker’s department store. A near-fine copy of a true modernist rarity.

Frank Howard; [Henry Tupman]. Colour as a Means of Art, Being an Adaptation of the Experience of Professors to the Practice of Amateurs. London: 1842. Octavo, modern three-quarter sheep. 94 pages, comprising Tupman’s manuscript copy of Howard’s text, and eighteen original watercolors by Tupman. $1800.

Skillful manuscript copy of English painter Frank Howard’s popular introduction to color theory, first published in 1838, with original watercolors in place of the lithographed plates. Howard offers a historical survey of the use of color in painting, introducing principles derived from the likes of Titian, Rubens and Turner. In this manuscript, produced by an otherwise unknown art student, the watercolors do more than simply mimic the lithographs in the printed book: they serve as direct performances of the principles at hand, turning Howard’s text into an art-historical activity book.


First edition, published as a resource for decorators by a London paint manufacturer. The book offers a sweeping survey of color through the ages — Persian Yellow, Chinese Turquoise, Tyrian Violet, Pomegranate Red, Aubusson Green, Rose Pompadour, Delft Blue — with historical commentary.

First edition of this pictorial retelling of *Sleeping Beauty*, produced in the wake of the first moon landing, and set in outer space. Originally a designer of corporate logos and trademarks, the Swiss artist Warja Lavater had a genius for the right symbol. In the late 1950s, she began to translate classic fairy tales into visual language, using minimalist graphic codes and keys. Like her contemporary Bruno Munari, Lavater combined the conventions of the picture book with the ideal of the “book-object” to create a playful new kind of artist’s book. The folding leporello format appealed to her as a medium, she explained, because it could “be transformed into sculpture, standing on the ground, or hung, unfolded, on the wall.” The first of Lavater’s folding “imageries” was *William Tell*, published by the Museum of Modern Art in 1962, followed by a series of symbolic fairy tales in the years to come, including *Little Red Riding Hood* (*Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, 1965), *Cinderella* (*Cendrillon*, 1974), *Snow White* (*Blanche Neige*, 1974), and a smaller separate treatment of *Sleeping Beauty* (*La Belle au Bois Dormant*, 1974). This early galactic interpretation of *Sleeping Beauty* is unusual not only in its much larger size, but also in its incorporation of text into the visual narrative. The characters are represented by vibrantly colored symbols of the space age, with the princess as the sleeping moon in orbit, awaiting her rocketship prince.
[GAMES]. Dissected Tables of Roman History Chronologically Arranged. London: E. Newbery & J. Wallis, 1789. Engraved pictorial table, mounted on mahogany and cut into interlocking puzzle pieces. Housed in publisher’s mahogany box, engraved chronological chart mounted to box interior, engraved pictorial paper label mounted to sliding lid. Title label toned, lightest occasional toning to pieces. $2200.

Historical puzzle depicting thirty-two portrait medallions of the rulers of Rome “from the foundation of the City to the Augustan age.” Beginning with the city’s legendary namesake Romulus, “fabled to be the son of Mars,” the table follows the Roman Republic through the reign of Julius Caesar, who “adores the city,” and Marc Antony, who “falls into a state of debauchery” thanks to Cleopatra. The sequence culminates in the triumph of Augustus, the first Roman emperor.

John Wallis was the leading board game manufacturer in London; he collaborated on this puzzle with Elizabeth Newbery, who carried on the family business founded by pioneering children’s publisher John Newbery. Produced before the invention of the jigsaw, these early “dissected tables” were cut into pieces by hand, and marketed as teaching aids rather than toys. Percy Muir notes that this particular puzzle was unusual in taking historical figures as its subject, rather than the traditional map (Children’s Books of Yesterday). A remarkable survival, bright and complete.


First edition in book form of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven,” the single most famous American poem of the nineteenth century. Partly inspired by the early lyrics of Elizabeth Barrett (later Browning), to whom he dedicated this volume of poems, Poe composed “The Raven” in trochaic octometer, with a deranged musicality all his own. The elements are unforgettable: the “midnight dreary,” the silk-curtained chamber, the raven perched upon the bust of Athena, the relentless refrain that drives the narrator mad. “‘Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken! / Leave my loneliness unbroken! – quit the bust above my door! / Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!’ / Quoth the Raven, ‘Nevermore.’” Even before publication, Poe knew he had a sensation on his hands. When a friend described an early reading of the poem as “fine, uncommonly fine,” Poe responded: “Is that all you can say for this poem? I tell you it’s the greatest poem ever written.” The publication of “The Raven” paved the way for Wiley and Putnam’s publication of Poe’s Tales, the collection that introduced his pioneering detective fiction to a wider audience that same year. A near-fine copy of a landmark in American literature.

Folding chromolithographed game board, with four spinning “indicator” arrows mounted on color-printed cardboard, four original wooden game pieces, and instruction booklet. Edges of game board and cardboard mounts rubbed, instruction booklet lightly stained. Housed in publisher’s chromolithographed cardboard box, joints split. $650.


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