

Calais through France, Switzerland, Italy and the Low Countries between 1736 and 1737. Bound together contemporaneously, these fetched £7,500.

In addition to their almost fortnightly online sales throughout the period, the ever-industrious Forum Auctions bookended the summer with two live sales on 18 July and 28 September. The first of these included two further examples of original Indian material, both of which attracted serious attention: an extensive family archive of letters from Jonathan Scott (1753–1829), Persian Secretary to Warren Hastings, £8,000, and a collection of twenty-four watercolour sketches of General James Maurice Primrose's time in India with the 43rd Foot, c.1855–64, which fetched £10,000. Amongst 17th-century books, the highest price achieved, £46,000, was for a fragment – bound by Bernard Middleton – from Shakespeare's first folio (London, 1623), comprising the complete *Henry IV, Pt. I*. A rather heavily defective He Bible, the first appearance of the Authorised Version (London, 1611 – PMM 114), ex Cheshunt College, fetched £16,000. Surely the most interesting item of the sale was Pierre Gassendi's copy of Francis Bacon's manifesto of scientific learning, *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum* (Paris, 1624), bound for French philosopher Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Pieresc by Simon Corberan in handsome red morocco. Gassendi went on to write the biography of de Pieresc, who was heavily involved in the 'dissemination of Baconian thought across continental Europe'. The catalogue note eloquently suggested that this copy therefore 'represents an extraordinary union of three of the principal advocates of the New Science'; bidders clearly agreed, with this choice copy making £32,000. Their September sale saw strong prices fetched for second editions of both Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* – one of just 500 copies, £15,000 – and *Frankenstein* (London, 1822) which fetched £20,000. The latter displayed, for the first time, Mary Shelley's name as the author, and its price far exceeded a good copy, albeit in a slightly later calf binding, of the first edition of her mother Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London, 1792 – PMM 242), which made £9,000.

Chief among the offerings of Dominic Winter Auctioneers of South Cerney on 11 September was a truly important book from the library of Queen Mary I; the third edition of Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (Basle, 1555), complete with the royal arms and her 'MR' monograms to the panels (which had been neatly onlaid to the 18th-century rebind), and four finely executed contemporary pen, ink and watercolour maps, per-

haps the work of Reyner Wolfe. The short reign of ‘Bloody Mary’, and the religious tumult of the 16th century that sealed both her epithet and place in history no doubt goes some way to explain the paucity of books from her library appearing on the market. Winters could locate no other examples having troubled the rooms. The fine catalogue note, with a contextual ‘note on the education and library of Queen Mary I (1516–1558) by Dr Peter Leech’, is available on their website and firmly recommended. Unsurprisingly, the volume attracted fierce bidding, making £140,000 against an estimate of £20,000–30,000.

Honourable mention in this season of slim pickings must go to several provincial houses: Lawrences of Crewkerne’s sale of 6 September included Garrick’s copy – neatly rebacked, and at some point presented to Thomas Rackett (1757–1840) – of the 1755–59 elaborately illustrated Parisian edition of Jean de la Fontaine *Fables*, which made a very justifiable £4,800. Second editions of Jane Austen’s enduring novels *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* (both London, 1813) made £4,500 and £7,100 respectively at Reeman Dansie (24 September) and Rare Book Auctions of Lichfield (18 September). The latter is a new venture by Jim Spencer, previously of Hansons at Bishton Hall.

However, by far the standout sale of the season so far – of the residual library at Ombersley Court – was hosted by Chorleys of Prinknash Abbey on 17 September. Previously the family seat of the Sandys family, the Worcestershire country-house’s library had remained ‘largely untouched since the early 19th century’, and betrayed the varied tastes and interests of its previous owners; including Edwin, 2nd Baron Sandys (1726–1797) – a friend of the Thrales – and his niece Mary Hill, Marchioness of Downshire and Baroness of Ombersley (1764–1836). While many of the latter’s extensive collection of Gothic novels had been dispersed at Sotheby’s in 2019, the Chorleys sale included a copy of the first edition of *The Necromancer, or the Tale of the Black Forest* (London, 1794). Published by the Minerva Press, it is perhaps the best known of the infamous ‘Horrid Novels’ later to feature in the narrative of *Northanger Abbey*; it fetched a strong £12,500. Among earlier books, a particularly splendid copy – finely bound in contemporary gilt-tooled vellum – of Thomas Nichols’s *A lapidary, or the History of Precious Stone* (London, 1652) deservedly made £8,000. Often generously lotted, as is the country-house sale manner, unmentioned works spotted amongst the shelf-lots included further Minerva Press novels and some