Collecting, Auctions, and the Book Trade

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Abstract

Every public talk has an assigned name and a secret name—just as T. S. Eliot’s cats all had secret names. The secret title of this talk is: “The Rare Book Community: 1 Nun, 2 Jakes, and the Reign of Terry.”

Let’s start with the Nun. She was Mother Katharine Drexel, the second American-born saint. When her banker father died in 1885, she inherited about $5 million, which would be about $80 million today. She became a nun, and by 1891 she had founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People. By the time of her . . .
Collecting a large list of books is a challenging and sometimes quite daunting task, I have always described my Paris Olympia collection as a working collection, to clarify that definition, it is a collection that has been built and depleted many times over 30 years, my financial circumstances have meant that I have purchased copies of books in the best condition I can afford at any given time, subsequently upgrading the quality, subject to the availability of books and the thickness of my wallet. I have at times purchased large numbers of titles from book dealers all over Europe, the advanta Leab, Katharine Kyes, Collecting, Auctions, and the Book Trade. (This article (really a speech) first appeared in RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage, Spring 2010, 11:47-60.) Leab, Katharine Kyes, That Was Then, This Is Now - But Our Love Is Here to Stay (Keynote address for the 2011 Colorado Antiquarian Book Seminar). Leab, Katharine Kyes, "H. Bradley Martin and Other Rare Birds: Collectors and their Astonished Families," delivered as the John Seltzer and Mark Seltzer Memorial Lecture at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, in Octo