

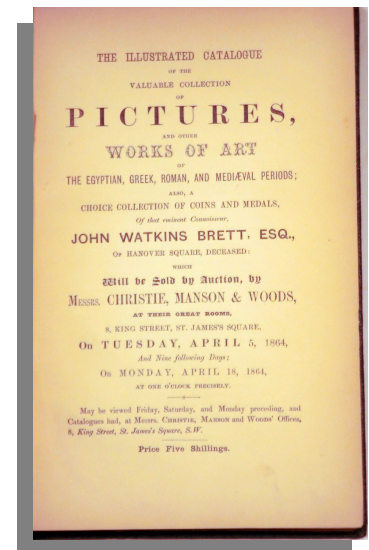
CATALOGUE OF THE JOHN WATKINS BRETT SALE, INSCRIBED TO HIS BUSINESS PARTNER CYRUS W. FIELD BY HIS BROTHER JACOB BRETT – THE SECOND AUCTION CATALOGUE TO FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGES

The 1864 Christie's London catalogue of the John Watkins Brett collection, the second-ever auction catalogue to include tipped-in photographs. This copy of inscribed to industrialist Cyrus W. Field from the owner's brother. A highly significant catalogue with a notable inscription.

Christie's. London. *The Illustrated Catalogue of the Valuable Collection of Pictures and other Works of Art of the Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Mediaeval Periods; also, a Choice Collection of Coins and Medals, Of that eminent Connoisseur, John Watkins Brett, Esq., Of Hanover Square, Deceased.* April 5-18, 1864. Hardcover, 146 pages, 2051 lots, illustrated with 49 original albumen photographs, tipped in.

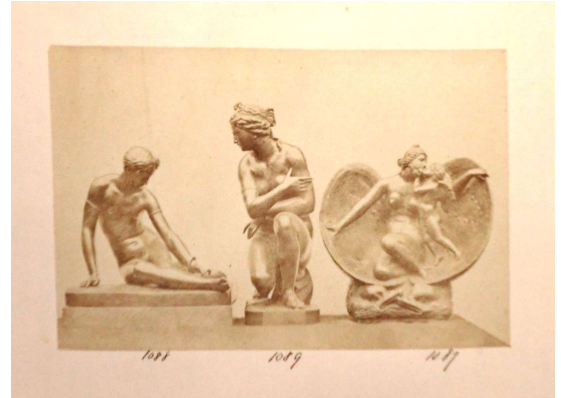
Catalogue of the collection of telegraph engineer John Watkins Brett (1805-1863). Along with his brother Jacob Brett (1808-1897), he was responsible for the first undersea telegraph cable, which successfully connected England to France temporarily in 1850 and permanently in 1851. With financier Cyrus Field and engineer Charles Tilston Bright, he founded the Atlantic Telegraph Company in 1856. The company made its first attempt at laying a trans-Atlantic telegraph cable in 1857, but was foiled when the cable began to unwind too fast and broke during the installation. A subsequent attempt in 1858 encountered numerous mishaps, including a protracted storm at sea and several separate breaks in the cable, but was ultimately successful. The cable operated for two months before breaking down.* Brett wrote a book on the subject in 1858 but died before Field achieved a permanently successful cable in 1866.

A lifelong lover of art, Brett painted in his younger years and collected and traded throughout his lifetime. His massive collection was sold over eleven days in 1864, the year following his death, and included porcelain and pottery, enamel, metal ware, glass, furniture, old master and modern paintings and drawings (including works by Gainsborough, Joshua Reynolds, Rembrandt, Breughel, Domenichino, Lucas Cranach, van Dyck, Claude Lorraine, Frans Hals, Veronese, Durer, Titian, Raphale, Poussin, da Vinci, Velasquez, Rubens, and Brett himself), sculpture, antiquities, books and manuscripts, diverse engravings, medals and coins, jewelry, miniatures, crystals, ivories, and Asian works of art.



While Brett's collection included many works of extremely high quality, the catalogue's significance lies elsewhere. The Brett sale was only the second auction catalogue ever to include photographs – a total of forty-nine tipped-in images. Additionally, this particular copy is inscribed on the front end-paper to Brett's business partner Cyrus Field by Jacob Brett. "*Presented to Cyrus W. Field Esq. by Jacob Brett*".

The catalogue has an elegant, forest green binding with a gilt border on the front cover, gilt titles on the cover and spine, and gilt-tipped pages. Worldcat lists thirteen copies in American libraries and four in England. At the time of writing, no other American bookseller is offering an original copy of this catalogue.



Price upon request.

* Glover, Bill. "Cabot Strait Cable and the 1857-58 Atlantic Cables". History of the Atlantic Cable & Undersea Communications (website). <http://atlantic-cable.com/Cables/1857-58Atlantic/index.htm>
Accessed 10/16/2014.

Presented to
Cyrus W. Field Esq.
by Jacob Brett