

Peramund, G. E.

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OPPENHEIMER, SON & COMPANY, LIMITED.

AWARDED ONLY GOLD MEDAL
INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS

INLAND TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: "BIPALATINOID, LONDON"
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: "13492 CENTRAL"
5899 HOLBORN.
CABLE ADDRESS A.S.C. CODE
"OPERATOR, LONDON"

WR2/4/1
179, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET,
LONDON, E.C.

Nov. 16th. 1910.

C. J.S Thompson Esq.

Greyfriars,

Harrow on the Hill.

Dear Mr. Thompson,

I have made enquiries with reference to the miniatures and pictures from 118 to 125 of the list you have and find that some years ago these were borrowed by an American Professor ostensibly to have copies for a publication he was interested in, but they were never returned and on sending to the address given the gentleman had disappeared, hence we cannot submit them for your inspection, and so far as the Mediaeval Iron Instrument you mentioned is concerned we cannot find any trace of it, possibly it has been lost or stolen at one of the Exhibitions at which these antiquities were displayed, in any case it does not appear to be in the present collection. If there are any of these you would like to review or anything you wish to speak about I can always make an appointment on the 'phone, for your convenience the telephone Nos. are - Holborn 5899 and Central 13492, otherwise perhaps you will post on the offer you propose to make for this collection to me at the above address.

Yours very sincerely
George Oppenheimer.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Edward

Harrow on the Hill.

WR2/4/2

17th November 1910.

Dear Mr. Pearmund,

I desire to thank you for yours of 16th inst., re "Collection of Antiquities" and note that the miniature and picture sections are missing, and must be deleted from the inventory.

Since examining the collection yesterday, I have gone into the matter very fully, and considering that a large proportion of the terra-cotta votive offerings, etc., are plaster copies of the originals, which I can obtain for a small sum at any time, and also that a large percentage of the surgical instruments are modern copies of the real ancient ones, and so of little value, I should not feel disposed to offer more than Three hundred and fifty pounds at the outside for the entire collection I saw yesterday.

As I expect to be leaving London for abroad within the next few days, I shall be glad if you will kindly let me have your decision on the matter by an early post, as after I leave London, I regret I cannot allow the offer to remain open.

I am,

Faithfully yours,

G. E. Pearmund Esq.,

C/o Messrs. Oppenheimer Son & Co. Ltd.,

179 Queen Victoria Street, E.C.

WR2/4/3

Narrow.

18th November 1910.

Dear Sir,

Confirming our conversation of this morning with respect to the collection of antiquities as viewed by me, to meet you in the matter, I am willing to increase my offer to Three hundred and seventy five pounds for the collection. This is absolutely final. *Please wire me reply definitely this afternoon.*

I am,

Faithfully yours,

C. J. ST.

G. E. Pearmund Esq.,
C/o Messrs. Oppenheimer Son, Co. Ltd.,
Queen Victoria Street.

Pearmund

WR2/4/4

"Weston" Claremont Rd,

Teddington.

Nov. 18th. 1910.

Dear Sir,

I beg to confirm the telegraphic acceptance of your offer of £375 (Three hundred and seventy five pounds) for the collection of antiquities, viewed by you Wednesday last the 16th inst.

Any arrangements you may wish to make regarding their removal can be done by Phone tomorrow morning and delivery will be made on receipt of your cheque covering the amount,

I am,

Yours faithfully,

George A. Picton

N.B.—This Form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.



POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

Office Stamp.

If the Receiver of an Inland Telegram doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 1d. less than $\frac{1}{2}$ d. being reckoned as $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; and if it be found that there was any inaccuracy, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams.

Office of Origin and Service Instructions.

Charges
to pay

s. d.

Handed
in at

4 10 P

Received
here at

4 23 P

TO { Thompson Greypriars Harrow

Accept offer confirming letter
following Pearson

Duplicate
books SS Rouse
on the Nile
Nov 24 1910

SNOW HILL BUILDINGS.
LONDON. E.C.

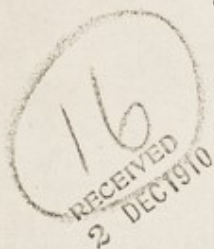
WR 2/4/5

18th November 1910.

Dear Mr. Wellcome,

C. T. 4.

Dr. Sambon came to see me in the early part of the week with respect to making arrangements to go to Venice to take delivery of the pharmacy vases and bottles from Malliani. He told me he was in desperate straits for money, which he must have at once, and he was therefore compelled to realise his books, which were part of his working library, and some treasures of historical medical interest that his father had ^{recently} given to him. He said if I could not help him he would be bound to try and sell them elsewhere, as his need was imperative. He asked me if I would go and see them, and if possible purchase them from him to relieve him of the immediate pressure, before he went away. On his giving me proof that this was perfectly genuine and that he was really in a very tight corner, I went and examined what he had. I selected nearly one hundred old works on medicine and surgery and astrology, of most of which we have copies already, and also a complete set, well-bound, of the Lancet, beginning from the first number down to a few years ago. (The first five volumes of the Lancet, as you know, are extremely rare, and generally sell for nearly One pound each). Also a complete set of the British Medical Journal, the Practitioner,



See postscript
for
consultant advised

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(AHL)

and The Medical Society's Transactions. In many of these early periodicals I found many interesting pictures of medical historical interest. I bought these from him at the rate of sixpence per volume, bound in cloth and calf, and altogether purchased ^{valuation.} from him four hundred and twenty-two volumes, at a low

With regard to the objects of medical interest.

I found he had a few exceedingly choice and rare items, several of which I recognized as those which I had to eliminate from his father's collection when I bought it in Milan, on account of the very high value the old man put upon them. One of these is a large pair of Roman bronze ^{hemorrhoid} forceps, with exceptional patina, of which there are only three known, and which I remember old Mr. Sambon valued at Five hundred lire alone. Another is a fine bronze Greco-Roman cupping instrument. We have two, but this one is just as fine. He had also five very beautifully worked bronze Roman surgical instruments, spatulae and probes; a rare bronze ear, votive offering; an ancient Roman surgical instrument case, smaller than the one we have; an antique bronze Roman probe, partly cased with gold; a large stamped leather instrument case of the 14th century; a large fish-skin lancet case, fitted with silver lancets; a 14th century leather case of Arab surgical instruments, fully fitted, exceedingly interesting; a 15th century old iron composite veterinary instrument, with five or six curiously

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(AH)

I am extremely
glad to get
these and the
price is moderate

shaped lancets; for these objects and the four hundred and twenty-two volumes I offered him Eighty-five pounds, which he accepted gratefully, and I brought them away the next morning.

He left for Venice on Wednesday night, and I have given him full and explicit instructions as to the collection of the vases, and the packing, for which he himself is going to be responsible. After seeing them sent off, he is returning to Milan via Bergamo, where he will call and see the members of the Hospital Committee, and see if they can come to a final decision respecting the sale of the old Library, and he will wire me from there if he can conclude the bargain on the matter.

I believe he will do his best and trust to be able to carry the matter through without any hitch.

I trust you are already feeling stronger and better for the change to a warmer and drier climate and that your health will soon be completely restored.

Faithfully yours,

J. S. Thompson

H. S. Wellcome Esq.

I am steadily
but slowly improving
the stay at Kelowna
and the journey by
boat up the Nile
is proving highly beneficial.

WR2/4/5
(AK.)Post-script.

Did he know of
your association
with me or with
B.W.C.

L. T. 5. Two days ago I was approached privately in a
mysterious way by a man called Pearmund, who is
at present one of Oppenheimer & Son's staff, and
was formerly employed by us in our Advertising
Department. I arranged an interview with this
man whom I had never seen before, and asked him
why he wished to see me. He said that he had
heard I was interested in medical antiquities
and that Messrs. Oppenheimer were open to sell
a large collection of very valuable Roman anti-
quities, which the late head of their firm had
collected while he was abroad some twenty years
ago. (?) He said that Cambridge University
Museum a few years ago had offered Two Thousand
Pounds for this collection, but it had been re-
fused at the time. When I asked him what price
they were asking for the collection, he said they
were going to call in a West-end valuer to value
the same, and would go on his decision. Direct-
ly he said this I xxx saw I must keep the West-
end valuer out of the business altogether, and
told him that if he would take any advice from
me, it would be that there was no valuer in
London who knew anything about matters of this
kind, and that they would only be disappointed
in the end, and their chances of sale would be
probably considerably lessened. I asked him if
he was empowered to sell, and he stated that the
Managing Director had empowered him to sell the

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(AW)

XXI

collection, which would be made over to him when he found a purchaser, but they would not consent to the collection being sold to Messrs. Burroughs Wellcome & Co. (!) If I liked to acquire it privately it was another matter. The mystery that they made of it was so clumsy as to be absolutely ludicrous. I told him that I could not do anything without seeing it, and arranged to go the following afternoon to inspect it, as I judged it to be best to give them no opportunity of offering it elsewhere. At the same time I showed ^{no} anxiety to secure it, my excuse being that I should probably be leaving London within the next day or two, and if I thought anything of it I would let them know at once after seeing it.

Meanwhile, before going to Oppenheimer's I telephoned to Dr. Sambon to come down and told him as much as necessary. Of course he was extremely delighted on hearing they had come in touch with me, and he found for me a complete catalogue of the original collection as it was when they took it from him, and also told me that the amount he got from Oppenheimer's after a legal action which was settled out of court was Five hundred pounds for the entire lot, but said that really without any bias, the collection was worth a great deal more as it contained objects which were absolutely unique, which he had

I have seen the collection and I can confirm this

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(AH)

never seen on any of his journeys and which were never likely to be met with again. All this information was useful to go upon.

When I went to Oppenheimer's I was met by Pearmund, who took me to a large room where they had the collection of terra cotta votive offerings stored in large chests, and the bronze and other objects in the glass cases I should judge in which they were exhibited seventeen years ago, covered thickly with dust. They went through them by a typewritten copy of Dr. Sambon's catalogue, and checked them off, and the only things that I found missing were some copies of miniatures ^{pictures} taken from old manuscripts and books in the Italian Museum.

*I think we have
copies of these*

While I was talking about this, Mr. Ball, the managing director, appeared on the scene, and was introduced to me. Mr. Ball said that he understood I had come to look at this very valuable collection of antiquities, and I asked him how they were got together. He said that Mr. Oppenheimer in years gone by, first saw a number of them in Rome, and then he employed an Italian doctor, who was no longer in England, to collect many of them, while he collected some himself. They had only been shown twice, sixteen or seventeen years ago, and since then had remained untouched, with the exception of these miniatures, which Mr. Oppenheimer had loaned to

WR2/4/5
(AH.)

an American doctor who was writing a book on old medicine. The American doctor went off with the drawings and they had never been seen since. I asked Mr. Ball then what sum his farm required for the entire collection. If I was to consider it, it was no use naming any prohibitive amount. He then trotted out again the story about the Cambridge University offering them Two thousand pounds, and said that the very lowest price they could accept for the collection as it stood, which numbered between one and two thousand objects, was One thousand pounds. I asked him if he knew that a very large proportion of the terra cottas were simply plaster casts that could be got for a few shillings without any difficulty in Italy. He said that he did not know, or profess to know, anything about them, and that one must take it as it stood. I then completed my inventory and made a thorough inspection of the collection, and in the end told Mr. Pearmund that I was not prepared to make any offer approaching One thousand pounds, but if they were open to accept a liberal valuation from myself and close the matter quickly, I would make them a definite offer that night. I went into the matter that night very carefully, weighing the whole thing over, and came to the conclusion that the very lowest estimate I could put on the whole collection was about Four hundred pounds, but I fully believe that it is worth over Five hundred pounds.

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(AH)

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I wrote to them yesterday making them a definite offer of Three hundred and fifty pounds, that being the outside price I would pay. I said that I could not allow this offer to remain open for long as I should probably be leaving London and if anything was to come of it they must come to a definite conclusion. This morning Mr. Pearmund telephoned to state that the matter had been before the managing director, and that they would not take a penny less than Five hundred pounds. I told him that this price was out of the question, and that I could not see my way to increase my original offer in any way. About an hour after he called to see me, stating that to meet me in the matter as I was going away, they would accept Four hundred pounds as the very final amount. After some demur, I said that I would split the difference with them, and meet them halfway, and offered them Three hundred and seventy five pounds. This offer was accepted by Mr. Pearmund on behalf of the managing director, subject to a confirmation at a meeting of their Board which is to be held this afternoon, when they will write to me and confirm it.

The collection contains five hundred and fifty-five terra cotta votive offerings, large and small; a number of bronze Roman denaria; twenty-six medieval silver votive offerings; twenty biberons; a number of terra cotta lamps; forty-seven pieces of Murano glass used in pharmacy; one hundred and

WR 2/4/5
(AM)

9.

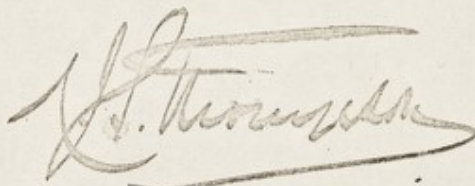
forty five genuine ancient Roman surgical instru-
ments found at Pompeii, Herculaneum and Rome; a
large collection of medieval surgical instruments,
amulets, coins, bottles, strigiles, and an ivory
anatomical figure. In all about one thousand
objects.

It is a very curious thing that after all these
years of stalking this collection, it should come
about in this way, and I should judge from all
appearances that the firm in question are wanting
money, and although I betrayed no anxiety to ob-
tain it, I think the urgent card was the best to
play in the matter, and do not think we should
have got it for less.

I propose taking delⁱvery of each object my-
self, and having them most carefully packed in
wool and stored at Shoolbred's.

In haste,

Faithfully yours,



H. S. Wellcome Esq.

I am very
thankful to
get them ~~but~~
they fill a very
important place
for H. S. E

W.