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The British Herbal: An History of Plants and Trees, Natives of Britain, Cultivated for Use, or Raised for Beauty

John Hill

£7,500

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Description

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[001495] Hill, John. The British Herbal: An History of Plants and Trees, Natives of Britain, Cultivated for Use, or Raised for Beauty. ill. Roberts, H. et al. London: T. Osborne and J. Shipton; J. Hodges; J. Newbery; B. Collins and S. Crowder and H. Woodgate, 1756. First Edition. Elephant Folio. Hardback. Good. [4], plates, [1], 2-533pp, [3], dated 1756, but actually 1757-8. Original calf, recently rebacked with original back strip laid on, spine in seven panels, title label to second panel, remaining panels gilt with floral sprays, covers with gilt roll border, floral corner pieces, gilt roll to edges, all edges marbled, shell pattern marbled endpapers with old joins due to sheet size difficultiesGilt to spine faded, small hole to fourth panel of original back strip, recornered, gilt touched up in a couple of places, small amounts of loss to leather covering fore edges of boards, covers rubbed with a few minor scratches. Internally some light spotting and browning, especially to title, first few plates, and first few pages of text, otherwise fairly bright and clean. Several plates with a few minor repairs, plate one has had the bottom corner infilled and plate thirty-nine has had the top corner infilled, neither affecting image. A couple of unrelated pieces of ephemera laid in, three botanical samples pressed loosely inside the book. Armorial bookplate of Rev. Charles Butler Clough (instrumental in the saving of the Mold Gold Cape) to front pastedownWith seventy-five hand coloured botanical plates bound before the text, a hand coloured allegorical frontispiece showing 'The Genius of Health receiving the tributes of Europe, Asia, Africa ans America and delivering them to the British Reader', a title vignette, featuring 'Asculapius and Flora gathering from the Lap of Nature, Health and Pleasure', and the hand-coloured coat of arms of Hugh Smithson, Earl of Northumberland, to the dedication pageThe work was initially published in fifty-two weekly parts at 6d, between January 1756 and January 1757, with this coloured edition, on 'Royal' paper, following later in 1757-8. With engraved frontispiece by H. Roberts (Henry Roberts, see Alexander, 'A Biographical Dictionary of British and Irish Engravers 1714-1820', pages 752-3) and vignette to title engraved by C.[harles] Grignion (Alexander, page 404), both being after Samuel Wale, title in red and black. The plates are engraved by several hands including H. Roberts, Darly and Edwards (see Alexander pages 264-269 and 316), R.[obert] Benning (see Alexander page 109), Boyce (probably Samuel Boyce, an apprentice of John Pine, and later a poet (see Alexander age 142), with several unsigned. The plates are dismissed by Henrey as being "sufficiently clear for the plants depicted to be recognized [but] they have little scientific or artistic merit" (Henrey II: 92). However, Henrey also notes that the "genera and species are clearly described ... and the work is of importance as ... a number of generic names used by pre-Linnaean authors, but suppressed by Linnaeus, retain here their first pre-Linnaean significance, and were thus restored to botanical nomenclature ... [it] is also of interest for Hill's criticism of Linnaeus" (Henrey II: 94)#Freeman 16...

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