

The London Cries. London: T. Carnan, 1770. 3 5/8 inches x 2 5/8 inches (91 x 66 mm), 31 pages, 26 woodcuts.

The earliest known London street hawkers' shouts were published in the form of broadsides in the late sixteenth century, presumably for the amusement of men, as the few extant examples contain bawdy banter. *The Cryes of the City of London Drawne after the Life*, published by Pierce Tempest in 1687, may be the first version for children. Marcellus Laroon's illustrations for the edition (copperplates engraved by John Savage and his assistants) were subsequently copied by many other children's book publishers. The *Cryes* must have been popular because Tempest issued five editions, with the illustrations increasing from an initial forty to seventy-four in his final 1709 edition. Henry Overton purchased the plates from Tempest, republished them under his imprint circa 1711, and eventually passed them on to Robert Sayer. Myriad children's editions of *The London Cries* (and *Cries of London*) were published up to about 1825. In 1754 John Kirk produced four different children's versions—in loose sheets, bound, boxed, or in scroll form—with a dozen prints. This edition of *The London Cries* follows the general model of cries for children; the calls of London's street peddlers are accompanied by illustrative woodcuts.

This edition of the *Cries* was published by Thomas Carnan, who was the stepson of John Newbery (1713–1767), the Englishman considered by some to be the inventor of children's literature and by others to have been the first to recognize its commercial potential. After Newbery's death in 1767, the publishing business was continued by two separate firms, one headed by Newbery's son Francis and Thomas Carnan, and the other by Newbery's nephew Francis and Francis' wife Elizabeth. Relations between the competing firms were not friendly, and Carnan and Newbery's partnership dissolved after a time, with Carnan continuing to publish and Francis selling patent medicines, which were part of his father's business.

This copy of *The London Cries* is in a contemporary binding of boards covered with Dutch floral paper. It is in the Douce Collection at Oxford's Bodleian Library, and the

Douce stamp (“EX DONO FR. DOUCE | BIBL. BODL.”) appears on the title page. Francis Douce (1757–1834) was a British antiquary and the Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum from 1807 to 1811. His bequest of more than 19,000 volumes contained printed books from various periods, including nearly 500 incunables, as well as roughly 425 manuscripts. Eighteenth- and early nineteenth– century children’s books numbered among Douce’s wide range of collecting specialties.

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