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Fortunino Matania R.I. (1881-1963)

‘Regent Street’, Ploegsteert (‘Plugstreet’) Wood, eight miles south of Ypres.
Pen, brush, ink and grey wash. Inscribed verso: ‘Passed by the Censor.

Major A. Stuart, GHQ, 14.5.15’ and ‘The Sphere 29th May 1915’.

Illustrated: *The Sphere*, London, 29th May, 1915, pp.216-217.

Lit: Lucinda Gosling, *Goodbye, Old Man: Matania’s Vision of the First World War*,
History Press, 2014, Ill. p.56.

12x20.5 inches.

£4,000

‘A relief party is here seen marching along “Regent Street” from the wood of “Ploegsteert” which some time ago became known to the Tommies – and subsequently to official despatches – as “Plug Street”. They are marching along the narrow footway made of small branches closely placed together upon bigger transverse ones below. The men carry back with them from their billets their various personal belongings. Advancing with the party is a lieutenant, map in hand. The men are in no immediate danger - “a long line of sand bags, a little higher than a man, provided sufficient defence” writes Mr Matania. Above the height of 6ft the slender trees are scarred with the marks where the bullets hit them a glancing blow. Sometimes a man will turn his head to follow, as it were, the track of a singing bullet through the air. On the extreme right is a sand-bag shelter...’. (Extract from *The Sphere*).