

Ignis Fatuus. A Diverse Collection of Books which in one way or another are to some degree or other illuminative of the flight of man's fancy & desires, or illustrative of his inventive imaginings; including voyages imaginaires & extraordinaires, fraudulent voyages & travels, utopias, paradises lost but not regain'd, satires & parodies, more or less skilful, romanticised versions of actual voyages & travels, fiction disguis'd as fact & fact in fictional guise, with skits & take-offs, some unpretending fiction, or just plain Baloney; in short, anything we feel disposed, for one reason or another, or without any reason at all, to include, to produce an assemblage of interesting, diverting & entertaining material, & without apology for obvious omissions & apparently pointless inclusions; comprising works ancient and modern, & mostly, but not entirely, with some relation to Australia & the Pacific Region — the general geographical area of the Terra Australis Incognita. Melbourne, Gaston Renard, 1978, pp. ii + 33. \$5.

Experienced academic bibliographers recognize that their skills would be greater and more reliable if they had had the opportunity of working as rare book librarians or, better still, as antiquarian booksellers. This point has been well made about some of the key figures in English bibliographical scholarship, which has happily never been confined to the perspectives of the classroom or of the thesis industry. Similarly the value of a good catalogue distilling the accumulated observations and knowledge of a specialist in some branch of the trade cannot be underestimated, especially at a time when bibliographers are more than ever conscious that they cannot solve their problems by focusing narrowly on textual minutiae and that they must take proper account of the wider historical context of book production and distribution. For this reason alone the present catalogue of Gaston Renard International Antiquarian Booksellers is worthy of mention in the Society's *Bulletin*.

Mr Renard's authority in the Australian and Pacific field hardly needs to be stressed. His special interest in and affection for the extensive literature of imaginary and extraordinary voyages are less widely known, so that it is fortunate that the Sixth Australian Antiquarian Booksellers' Fair held in Melbourne 16—21 October 1978 provided him with a ready pretext to catalogue material brought together over several years. Anybody familiar with the growing scarcity of the early editions of most of these narratives will have no difficulty in assessing the achievement represented in the collection itself.

However, as one has come to expect from the initiator of a new professionalism in Australian antiquarian bookselling, the catalogue is detailed and precise in its descriptions and abundant in its historical annotations. The method is not orthodox Greg-Bowers, of course, but due account is taken of signatures and of the physical make-up of the books listed. The 84 items run from Hall's *Mundus alter et idem* (Frankfurt, n.d. [1605], STC 12685) to Werner P. Friederich's *Australia in Western Imaginative Prose Writings 1600—1960* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1967), which also appears in

the list of authorities quoted (pp. i—ii). In between are some singularly uncommon books, some of which seem to have escaped any sort of record in the relevant bibliographies. A total of 16 illustrations (chiefly of title-pages, but also of plates and bindings) will help future users of the catalogue. The overall arrangement is chronological according to the date of publication of the first edition of each narrative included. A summary index of authors would have aided quick reference to the catalogue, but it can be argued that in this case the reader is forced by the absence of such props to browse profitably like the first potential buyers. Chance encounters have their part alongside method in the training of the bibliographer!

The author of a forthcoming provisional account of the various editions and translations of Gabriel de Foigny's *Avantures de Jacques Sadeur* is tempted to comment at length on Mr Renard's four entries devoted to that work (nos. 10—13), but he must desist. Suffice it to say that, with the exception of Lachèvre's biography of 1922, the major sources have been used. More important, Mr Renard's accurate bibliographical observations correct more than one gross error made by Lachèvre and repeated by literary historians thereafter. The first edition (Geneva, 1676 — no copy in the catalogue) is by no means as rare as has always been claimed. Indeed over thirty copies are known to exist in libraries in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. On the other hand only one copy seems to have come on the market since the Second World War. Our own great collectors, Petherick, Mitchell, Turnbull, Dixson and Ferguson, are in part responsible for the disappearance of this work into institutional libraries. It is in the surveying and recording of such imprisoned copies that the academic bibliographer can complement the work of booksellers, who are indispensable in prospecting the private sector.

Bibliographical control of imaginary voyages on "Australian" topics is made difficult by the variety of the languages used. The theme is exploited all over Western Europe, and Mr Renard's catalogue includes German and Portuguese examples alongside the more numerous English and French ones. Item no. 5, a condensed translation of Henry Neville's *Isle of Pines* (London, 1668), is said to be in Dutch and attributed conjecturally to Utrecht. However, on the evidence of the head-title as transcribed (pp. 3, 5) and illustrated (plate II, p. 4), the language of the translation is Swedish. The search for this unrecorded text needs to be pursued in other directions.

The catalogue is offset from typescript. A few small errors were noticed in what is an often difficult text. The most disconcerting — and potentially misleading for bibliographers — is that the Antiquarian Booksellers' Fair that was the external occasion of the whole enterprise is dated 1973 on the wrappers and 1972 in the colophon. (The correct date appears on page 1.) However, these minor lapses should not detract from Mr Renard's positive achievement in re-

directing the attention of collectors to a fascinating by-way in European intellectual and literary history and in stimulating further much-needed research on some teasing bibliographical problems. In this effort the collaboration of the trade and of the scholar will be — as always — essential.

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