

Recent notices of both parts by "The Book Collector" (Spring and Autumn 2006 issues)

Part I

Hordern House led off the catalogues on foreign parts with a splendidly produced catalogue of the collection of David Parsons, an English actuary now resident in Atlanta, whose desire to emulate John Carter Brown has led him to shed that part of his collection that deals with the Pacific. The first covered voyages up to Cook. Fine copies of Dampier and Anson led on to John Byron's manuscript order book of the 'Wager' that detached from Anson's main fleet and Dalrymple *An historical collection of the several voyages and discoveries in the South Pacific Ocean 1769-71*.

But the real plums came in the North Pacific section, with Buache *Considerations géographiques 1753-4*, Pringle's crucial tract on scurvy (1776), the French text of Cook's *The North-American pilot 1784* in mint French calf, preserved by an over-binding of coarse canvas only recently removed (A\$96,000), an equally fine set of the three voyages (A\$85,000), and a copy of Flemyng *An introduction to physiology 1759* certified as having gone all round the world in the 'Endeavour'.

An extraordinary copy in original boards of the very rare *A second voyage round the world 1776*, by 'An Officer', Samwell *A narrative of the death of Captain Cook 1786*, and a very fine copy of Webber *Views in the South Seas 1808* with its beautiful colour plates ended this first installment; we look forward to the next.

Part II

The second part of Hordern House's 'The Parsons Collection' deals with Pacific voyages after Cook, the copies no less remarkable than the first. *The voyage of Governor Philip to Botany Bay 1789* was coloured (A\$65,000), as was Smith *A specimen of the botany of New Holland 1793*.

Of fourteen items on Bligh and the *Bounty*, two extreme rarities were outstanding, the *Minutes 1792* of the mutineers' trial (\$115,000) and Bligh *An answer to certain assertions 1794*, strangely rare since it was printed by William Bulmer, the royal printer. Arrowsmith's first chart of the Pacific, 1801 (\$28,500) and *Narrative of the... Beagle 1839* (\$78,500) preceded the voyages of Beechey, Broughton, Colnett and Dixon; Dalrymple *Oriental repository 1791-7* was a subscriber's copy (\$38,500).

The two text volumes of Flinders *A voyage to Terra Australis* 1814, the first circumnavigation of Australia, were in boards, the elephant folio atlas in quarter calf (\$88,500). Mortimer *Observations* 1791, an account of a mysterious voyage apparently undertaken under Swedish auspices against Russian fur-traders on the northwest coast of America (\$38,000), was accompanied by the very rare little Swedish version, Nykoping, 1798 (\$13,250).

Vancouver *Voyage* 1798 (\$78,500) bulked less than La Pérouse, the original French text, 1797, in buff glazed boards uniform with Labillardière *Relation du voyage a la recherche de La Pérouse* 1800 (\$37,500 and \$32,000) matched by the English text, 1799, uncut in blue boards (\$32,000). Of the French *Voyages de découvertes aux Terres Australes*, Lesueur & Petit 1807 and Freycinet 1812-15 were both in red morocco (\$72,000 and \$95,000), while Freycinet *Voyage autour du monde* 1824-44, eight quarto volumes in ten with four atlas folios, the plates printed in colour, was p.o.a.

The Russian voyages included those of Sarychev, 1802 (\$68,500), and Kotzebue, represented by beautiful copies of Choris *Voyage pittoresque* 1820-2 and *Vues et paysages* 1826 and the romantic plates of Lütke, 1835-6 (\$98,500). These show the extent to which the Pacific had caught European imagination, the dream-like lithographs of Krusenstern *Voyage... sur les vaisseaux la Nadiejda et la Neva* 1821 matched by the outright fantasy of the Spanish Seriman *Viages de Enrique Wanton* 1781-5. The first American exploration, Wilkes *Narrative* 1845, brought it down to earth (\$55,000).

The Parsons collection will remain the touchstone by which collection in this field is measured in future.