

INTRODUCTION.

IN November 1881, Mr. Thos. Gill, of the South Australian Civil Service, called the attention of the Board of Governors of the South Australian Institute, Adelaide, to a paragraph which appeared in the *European Mail* of September 23, 1881, page 19, respecting a discovery at Amsterdam by Mr. J. H. Heaton of some valuable records connected with the discovery of Australia, and added as follows :—

“ Prior to the recent discovery by Mr. Heaton, there were known to be six (6) old charts of Australia in existence—four in England and two in France. The oldest is, as stated in the paragraph in the *European Mail*, in the British Museum; the second is in possession of Sir T. Phillips, of Middle Hill, Worcestershire, who, however, is chary of showing it; the other two, by Jean Rotz, dedicated to Henry VIII. in 1542, are also in the British Museum.”

Mr. Gill suggested that the Trustees of the British Museum should be asked to photo-lithograph these old charts (three in number).

The Board of Governors of the South Australian Institute thought the suggestion a good one, and wrote to the Trustees of the British Museum, but an answer was received to the effect that the Trustees were not at liberty to expend funds on such a work, but that they would willingly give all necessary facilities to enable the work to be undertaken by others.

On receipt of this reply, the Governors of the South Australian Institute thought it advisable to write to the Trustees of the Public Libraries of Melbourne and Sydney, asking if they would be willing to join in the expense of photo-lithographing these charts, and both bodies replied giving a cordial consent to the proposal.

In the course of the investigation which had to be undertaken, it appeared that there was a fourth chart in the British Museum which was apparently of equal interest with the other three.

It was subsequently found that the cost of reproducing the charts in all their entirety was more than the governing bodies of the three colonial libraries felt themselves warranted to undertake.

Taking all the circumstances into consideration, the three governing bodies determined that it would be advisable to reproduce the two small maps, and the southern sections of the two large maps.

Since this arrangement was made, the South Australian Institute has become the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery of South Australia.

Three sets (one for each of the three Public Libraries) have been coloured by hand, as nearly as possible in facsimile of the originals in the British Museum.

Each map is preceded by a short description taken from the Records of the British Museum.

LONDON, *August* 1885.