
Lost Explorers of the Pacific

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the Council. They change from year to year, but they represent a variety of men in prominent positions, with great experience and varying taste ; and from one and all I have received nothing but the kindest co-operation, consideration, and courtesy. And if these remarks apply to my colleagues on the Council, they apply equally, if not more, to the officials with whom I have had the honour of dealing, Sir Duncan Johnston and Captain Lyons, the Honorary Secretaries, who have gratuitously placed their services at the disposal of the Society during this time. Behind them I see seated the permanent officials of the Society, our old friend, Dr. Keltie, whose name is really identical with geography in this country, and one may almost say all over the world, and who at a time of life when most people would be taking their hand from the plough, has continued to work as strenuously, ably, and successfully as ever he did in the past ; Mr. Hinks also, who has already shown marks of the great ability which distinguished him at Cambridge and gained him an F.R.S. ; and our Librarian and Map Curator, whom I must ask you to allow me to include in this vote of thanks. Sir Francis Younghusband said I had worked them all very hard. Quite true ; it has been my way as a rule, but the defence I always offer is that I have never worked less hard myself. I hope this may be my justification for the strain to which almost everybody has been put during these last three years, and as I am usually told, when I resign an office, that it is very necessary in the public interest that a peaceful time should ensue, I can only hope that an era of tranquillity rests before the Society.

LOST EXPLORERS OF THE PACIFIC.*

By BASIL THOMSON.

FOUR hundred years ago last year, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa looked down upon the waters of the Pacific ocean from the heights of Darien. Beginning with Nuñez himself, who had built four vessels and was on the point of launching forth upon the unknown ocean when he was treacherously murdered, and ending with Scott and his heroic companions, exploration has been continuous throughout these four centuries, and it seems now safe to say that no lonely islet, perhaps not even a reef or a rock in all that huge expanse of ocean, remains uncharted. Sometimes the explorers went forth to find and settle new lands ; oftener they were navigating the ocean across the Pacific on other business bent, and discovered new land by the accident of being driven out of their course and cast away ; sometimes they were sent out to solve scientific problems.

It was not until 1788 that the discovery of sandalwood and the high price of sperm-whale oil drew the trading vessels and whalers of many nations to scour the Pacific. As the number of whalers increased, every island, however remote from the highways of shipping, was visited for wood and water, and thenceforward no cast-away was left long to languish like Enoch Arden, "A shipwrecked sailor waiting for a sail." For this reason I have closed my notes on the lost explorers at the end of the eighteenth century.

In tracing the history of these voyages, one sees how they were knit

* Royal Geographical Society, March 23, 1914. Map, p. 136.

together in a continuous chain, the accident of one voyage becoming the objective of the next; and one sees also upon how very slight a circumstance the political history of this part of the world depended. To take but two examples. Had Nuñez been allowed to pursue his voyage to the southward, he, and not Francisco Pizarro, might have become the conqueror of Peru, and the history of the ill-fated Incas might then have been different. There came a day during the occupation of the Solomon islands by Mendaña in 1568 when the whole expedition met in council to decide whether they should pursue their course to the westward, or make an attempt to beat back to the Mexican coast. The latter course was a most perilous enterprise: nevertheless, they chose it and survived; but had they launched forth westward to found a new settlement, they would in a few days have reached the coast of Queensland, and Northern Australia might well have become a Spanish possession.

The explorers of the sixteenth century who came back, told their tale and fired the imagination of the world by its romance or its tragedy, but for every one who returned, there was another who sailed away into the mist and lived and died in that dark outer world where events are unrecorded. It is only now when the scraps of evidence from later discoveries and from native tradition can be pieced together that we may follow some of them a little further into the gloom.

The first discoverers of the islands were the bold ancestors of the Polynesian race, who settled in lands as widely separated as New Zealand and Hawaii, Easter island and Rennel island, with no safer craft than a twin canoe, and no compass but the stars. We are concerned here with the explorers of European descent, though they were not the first strangers that reached the Pacific islands. According to Hawaiian tradition, about the year A.D. 1200, a vessel with white people (*Haole*) arrived at Oahu. The vessel was named *Ulupana*, and tradition, while careful to preserve the names of the captain and his wife (*Mololana* and *Malaea*), is silent as to what became of them.* Another arrival of castaways in the same group is recorded in greater detail in the native traditions of Maui. In the time of Wakalana (*circa* 1250), a vessel named *Malala* arrived at the islands, carrying white-skinned people with bright shining eyes (*Alohilohi Namaka*), both men and women. They intermarried with the natives, and their descendants were light-skinned for several generations.† These may have been Japanese or Chinese driven eastward by bad weather, as had happened twice to Japanese vessels in historical times.

Out of the five ships that sailed with Magellan in 1519, only two reached the Pacific and eventually the Philippines. From one of these ships deserted the first "beachcomber," one Gonzalo de Vigo, a native of Galicia, who, with two sailors, deserted from the *Trinidad* when she touched at the Ladrones. His two companions were killed by the natives, but he lived for five years among them, and was rescued by one of Loaysa's squadron.

* Fornander, 'The Polynesian Race,' vol. 2, p. 49.

† *Ibid.*, p. 80.

Loaysa sailed from Corunna in 1525 with seven ships. The desertion of two ships and the wreck of a third had reduced the fleet to four before it emerged from Magellan straits. A few days later a great storm scattered them, and they never saw one another again. The flagship *Victoria* reached the Moluccas; the Pinnace *Pataca*, after terrible sufferings, reached the Mexican port of Tehuantepec, but the *Parrel* and the *Lesmes* were never seen again. The *Sta. Maria del Parrel* got as far as Viscaya in the Philippines, and for many months nothing more was heard of her. Two years later (1528) Saavedra called at Viscaya for provisions. He was boarded by a Spaniard, one of the crew of the *Parrel*, who told a moving tale of how the natives had taken the ship, killed the captain and officers, and sold the crew into slavery. Believing this narrative, Saavedra ransomed the man and two of his companions, and it was not until after his arrival at the Moluccas that he heard the true story. The natives of Viscaya had certainly cut off a boat belonging to the *Parrel*, but the ship had met her fate, not from them, but from her own crew, who had mutinied and thrown all the officers overboard. Without captain or pilot, the ship ran aground on the island of Sangir, where she was captured by the natives. Since tardy justice was executed upon the three men ransomed by Saavedra, it is satisfactory to know that they were ringleaders in the mutiny.

Saavedra died at sea on the voyage back to Mexico. Had he lived, we are assured by Galvão, he would have attempted to carry out a project of cutting a canal through the Isthmus of Panama.

It is only by inference that we can guess what became of the *Lesmes*. Eighty years later—in 1606—Quiros touched at what is now believed to have been Anaa, Chain island, one of the cluster of small islands which lies to the eastward of Tahiti. Here he found signs of an earlier visit of Europeans. The natives had a breed of small speckled dogs. The Spaniards captured an old woman, who showed no fear of Europeans. The passage is worth quoting:—

“With this good capture the boat returned to the captain to show her to him, and he was much delighted at seeing a human creature. He seated her on a box and gave her meat and soup from a pot, which she ate without scruple; but she could not manage the hard biscuit. She showed that she knew well how to drink wine. A mirror was put into her hand, and she looked at the back, then at the front, and when she saw her face she was much pleased. . . . She looked at the goats as if she had seen them before. There was a gold ring, with an emerald on one of her fingers. She was asked for it, but replied by signs that she could not give it without cutting off her finger, and she seemed sorry for this.” *

* ‘The Voyages of Quiros, 1595–1606.’ Hakluyt Society, 2nd series, vol. 1, p. 201. Sir Clements Markham says that Quiros found an old cross, perhaps a relic of the *Lesmes*. I cannot find this stated in any of the Spanish accounts of Quiros’ voyage (‘Early Spanish Voyages to the Strait of Magellan.’ Hakluyt Society, 2nd series, No. 28, p. 49).

Quiros himself erected a cross in this island, and a cross was found in 1774 by another Spanish expedition, that of Gayangos.* Though it is difficult to believe that a wooden cross would survive the tropical rains and winds for 168 years, it is just possible that the natives, from superstitious motives, renewed it from time to time.

In 1527, two years after Loaysa had sailed away into the unknown, Cortes despatched three ships from Mexico under the command of Saavedra, to find him. This voyage, though it accomplished nothing, is specially important in the history of the Pacific, because there is reason to think that it carried the first discoverers of Hawaii. The ship sailed on November 1, 1527, and from the narrative of the pilot we are able to set down approximately the position of the ships each day. All went well for the first eight days, when it was discovered that the flagship had sprung a leak. It was decided, however, to 'carry on,' and for four weeks the ships appear to have made a very good run; but on the 29th day a new leak was discovered, and it was found that the ship would not answer her helm. That night there was a squall.

" . . . The man at the helm was negligent, and the ship was taken aback and nearly swamped. At last we got the sail down. The other ships passed on ahead with a sudden wind, and were soon out of sight. We showed many lights, but they never answered, and so we lost them. Our pilot went to bed, and did not care about making sail with them. Next morning we made sail on our course, and never more was there any sign of them." †

When this happened, the ships were in long. 160, lat. 11 N., or about 600 miles south-east of Hawaii. The wind was probably what is known locally as a *kona*, a south-easterly gale of great violence. Driving before it, the two lost ships would have made Hawaii in five days. Now, according to native tradition, a foreign vessel was wrecked on the Pali of Keei in the reign of *Kaeli'iokaloa* of Hawaii. With its usual scrupulous irrelevancy, native tradition has preserved the native names bestowed on the ship and her captain, but little else by which the navigators can be identified. Only the captain and his sister, we are told, swam ashore from the wreck: they intermarried with the natives, and their descendants were still living a few years ago.‡ There are several native versions of the incident, but they all go to confirm the belief that during this reign a European vessel was wrecked upon Hawaii. The native genealogies are a guide to the date. Taking thirty years for each generation, we arrive at 1525 for the middle of this short reign. History has left us no details

* "Close to the place where the boat anchored we saw a large wooden cross, leaning a little to the westward; and though we did not approach it near enough to inspect it, it appeared to be very ancient" (Bonichea's MS. Voyage, now being translated by Dr. Corney for the Hakluyt Society).

† 'Early Spanish Voyages to the Strait of Magellan.' Sir Clements Markham. Hakluyt Society, New Series, vol. 27, p. 113.

‡ Fornander, 'The Polynesian Race,' vol. 2, pp. 107, 108.

as to the crew of the two lost vessels, except that the *Santiago* carried forty-five and the *Espíritu Santo* fifteen men. If they had carried any women, the fact would probably have been recorded, but no other European vessels are known to have been lost in the neighbourhood of Hawaii at this period. We must also remember that the pilots of the two lost ships had already advised Saavedra to abandon the enterprise, and that in order to return to Mexico, they would naturally steer to the northward in the hope of picking up a fair wind for the homeward voyage, as Urdaneta, Legazpi's pilot, discovered a few years later. The identification is no more than a probability, but it is at least suggestive.

It is surprising to find how soon a trickle of European blood becomes absorbed into the native strain. I was on intimate terms for years with a Fijian chief of high rank (Ratu Deve of Bau) before I discovered that one of his great grandfathers was a European, and probably I should not have known this at all but for the fact that the ancestor had been a ship's captain, and he was not a little proud of the connection. The descendants of the ordinary beachcomber, who has done nothing to win the respect of the natives, are treated in all respects as natives in the second generation.

I may be allowed here a digression upon the vexed question as to who discovered the Sandwich islands. While admitting the unlikelihood that so large a group, lying not very far from the course of the annual galleon sailing from the Philippines to Mexico, should have remained undiscovered until 1778, Captain Cook is at pains to explain away the broadsword and the iron hoop which he found in the possession of the natives, by assuming that they had reached Hawaii in the course of barter: the astonishment which his ships excited, seemed to him to prove that Europeans had never before been seen. Apparently he was not aware that the islands had appeared in the charts of the Pacific nearly two centuries before, not, it is true, in their proper longitude, but approximately in their correct latitude. In a manuscript chart in the archives of the Spanish Colonial Office * the islands are shown, and there is a note that they were discovered by Juan Gaetano, who named them *Islas de Mesa* (Table islands). Now, Gaetano was the pilot of Saavedra's fleet. The accounts of this voyage are fragmentary and conflicting, but they do show conclusively that Hawaii was not sighted on the outward voyage. In 1543 Gaetano set sail for Mexico, but after sighting the Volcano islands north of the Ladrões, he put back again to the Philippines. His second attempt in 1545 was equally unsuccessful. After coasting along the northern shore of New Guinea as far as the Admiralty islands, he again abandoned the cruise. If, therefore, Gaetano ever saw Hawaii, it was in some cruise that is unrecorded. That he ever did so is improbable, because in his detailed discussion of the North Pacific, Hernan Gallego, the pilot of Mendaña's voyage in 1568, makes no allusion to islands in this position. It is a curious

* Despatch No. 64, of Feb. 21, 1865, quoted by Fornander, 'Polynesian Race,' vol. 2, p. 361.

coincidence that in Ortelius' chart of 1589 the Volcano islands are shown in approximately the position of Hawaii, and that in the later chart of 1592 other islands (*Monges* and *Desgraciada*) are added to them, which tends to show that between those dates a discovery had been made. In the chart of the Spanish galleon seized by Anson in 1743, these islands are shown in their proper latitude, but 20° east of their longitude,* and there is the significant addition of an island called *La Mesa* (Table island), which is not an inappropriate description of Hawaii as seen from a distance. When we remember that throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a galleon set sail annually from Manila in July, and followed a course on or about 30° N., passing Hawaii at a distance of less than 600 miles, it would be strange if the islands had never been sighted. The galleons carried from three hundred and fifty to six hundred people; the voyage lasted from five to six months, the only drinking-water was carried in earthen jars, and the crews trusted to the rain-water to replenish them. A half way house, such as Hawaii, rich in water and provisions, could scarcely have been shown on the chart unless it were occasionally used by vessels in distress. The actual discoverer of Hawaii is, with our present information, still uncertain, but he was certainly not Captain Cook.

It must always seem extraordinary that for nearly two hundred years a galleon sailed twice annually between Mexico and the Philippines without discovering Fiji, New Caledonia, and the other large groups in the south-western Pacific. The fact was that the galleons kept as closely to their appointed track as a modern liner. On their outward voyage they courted no risk, but steered along the parallel of 3° S. lat., where they were least likely to encounter dangers: on the return they steered northward to 30° N. lat., until they got out of the influence of the trade wind.† But the annual voyage had become so much a commonplace of colonial life that if a galleon failed to arrive, if month followed month, and uneasiness turned to consternation, if the relations of the five hundred souls on board abandoned hope, the disaster was soon forgotten, and no chronicler thought it worth while to embalm the fact in history or poem. There may, indeed, have been several losses of this kind in the course of two hundred years, and while the bones of the great galleon lay rotting on the white beaches of the Marshalls or the Carolines, the shipwrecked mariners may have settled down to rear dusky families among the palm trees. Certain it is that even in a lonely island like Niué the least observant eye will detect a strong dash of alien blood in every group of natives. Castaways fared badly in some of the islands. In Fiji the man who came ashore "with salt water in his eyes" was killed and eaten, for he was regarded as

* Burney points out (vol. 5, p. 158) that the eastern part of the chart of the Spanish galleon is 10° out. This would reduce the error in the position of Hawaii to 10° .

† 'A Voyage round the World in the Year 1740.' George Anson. London, 1780. No. I.—JULY, 1914.] c

a gift of the sea-gods. But even in Fiji there were exceptions, and in most of the groups Europeans were kindly treated.

Grijalva and Alvarado were despatched from Mexico in 1537 to assist Pizarro in Peru, and then to discover the "islands of gold" which were the common gossip of the taverns of the coast towns. All we know of this ill-fated voyage is that Grijalva was murdered in a mutiny because he would not bear away for the Moluccas. Davalos, the nephew and successor of the murdered captain, sailed westward for four months, touching sometimes at islands, becalmed for days together, suffering privations so grievous that when at last the ship reached the northern coast of New Guinea, her company had been reduced to seven persons, and her hull fell to pieces. The survivors, pursuing their voyage in the boat, were captured by the natives and sold as slaves, being afterwards ransomed by Galvano, the Governor of the Moluccas. It seems probable that they called at one of the islands of the Marshall group, for in 1568 Mendaña found in one of those islands a chisel made of an iron bolt.

The next voyage of which we have any certain knowledge is that of Villalobos in 1542. The object on this occasion was not to wrest the Spice islands from the Portuguese, but to make a settlement in the Philippines. The two ships reached the Moluccas in safety, and the second in command, Inigo Ortiz de Retes, was sent back to Mexico * to report. At this period, the Spaniards had not yet learned that the only way back across the Pacific was to sail northward until they were out of the path of the south-east trade wind. When De Retes left Tidore in 1545, he coasted along the northern shores of New Guinea, which he claimed to have discovered. Then, if we are to believe the fragmentary statements that have come down to us, he returned to the Moluccas. Villalobos surrendered to the Portuguese and died a prisoner in Amboyna.

The most pressing need of the Spanish explorers was to find a way back, and therefore it may be said that the sailor-monk, Urdaneta, who was persuaded to leave his Franciscan monastery to become pilot of Legazpi's successful expedition to the Philippines was the greatest discoverer of them all. Arguing that the wind could not blow the same way in all latitudes, he sailed north until he found a fair wind back to Mexico, and thenceforward there was constant communication between Mexico and the Philippines. The discovery was made in time to save the lives of Mendaña's crew in 1567. Mendaña discovered the Solomon islands, and wrote a very remarkable account of the natives and of the country,† which erred only in one respect—that he left the impression that the islands abounded in gold: thenceforward the lost "Islands of Solomon" became the objective of Spanish adventurers. It has already been said how near this expedition was to planting a Spanish colony in Australia. After suffering terrible hardships, both ships regained the American coast without

* Fornander, 'Polynesian Race,' vol. 2, p. 361.

† 'Discovery of the Solomon Islands.' Hakluyt Society, New Series, 7, 8.

serious loss of life. It then became Mendaña's life's work to prevail upon the Spanish Government to send him out in command of a new expedition to complete the discovery. For twenty-eight years he wrote memorials in vain. The Peruvian Government had its hands full of internal disorders, the Government at Madrid had other things to think about; but at last his importunity prevailed, and in 1595 he sailed from Peru in command of four vessels. The narratives of this voyage are perhaps the most curious documents in the whole history of travel. The expedition was actually cursed from the beginning, for we read that when taking in stores at the Port of Cherrepe, Mendaña was prevailed upon by his officers to commandeer a Spanish ship, of which the greater part belonged to a priest, because she was believed to be a sounder ship than his own.

"... The priest felt all this very deeply, and loudly declared that when he had to pray to Our Lord in his sacrifice, he would ask that the ship might never reach safety."

Of the four ships, three were never heard of again. The *Almiranta*, the second ship, parted company in a rain squall just as the New Hebrides had been sighted. No doubt her captain had made up his mind to desert—for desertion and mutiny of this kind seem to have been the common-places of the Spanish expeditions. However this may be, she vanished westward with the wind behind her. Whether she landed her crew of men, women, and children, with seeds and domestic animals and agricultural implements and everything necessary for making a settlement in the Northern Solomon Islands or the d'Entrecasteaux Group or in New Guinea, or whether she was cast upon the Great Barrier Reef in the night, and went down with all hands, can never now be known. On the beach of the loneliest of these islands, one may see anchors of strange shape, and the whitening bones of vessels of peculiar design, which have been slowly fretted by the sun and the wind and the storms of countless years. As in the case of La Pérouse, the galleon may have been wrecked and a few survivors may have lingered on among the natives, and left descendants of mixed blood behind them.

Until a few years ago, the charts placed an island called *Motu-iii*, or Kennedy island, in a most suggestive position, right in the course of the lost galleon as she drove westward from Santa Cruz. It is true that the Hydrographer added the letters P.D. (position doubtful), but the entry tempted the imaginative student of historical geography to speculate upon the society that would be found in the twentieth century to exist in an island peopled only by the descendants of pure-blooded Spaniards of the sixteenth century, who had been left to themselves for three hundred years. These alluring speculations were callously dispelled by a letter from the Admiralty declaring that Kennedy island had been proved not to exist, and that it had been expunged from the chart.

Mendaña's own settlement cost him and the greater part of the ship's company their lives. Well received by the natives, the Spaniards abused

their hospitality. One of the soldiers shot the chief, Malope, in cold blood ; mutinous officers and men were beheaded as a warning to others ; fever attacked every man and woman of the immigrants ; Mendaña himself and his principal officer died, and the poor remnant of the expedition re-embarked for the Philippines under the command of Mendaña's widow. Quiros was the pilot, and his account of the remainder of the voyage is very sad reading. Corpses were thrown overboard every day, the crew were mutinous, the sails were so rotten that at last no one had the heart to hoist them. First the galleon, then the frigate deserted them. The latter was so leaky that it was almost certain she perished with all hands, but the galleon reached Mindanao with a crew reduced to such extremity that they had landed on a small island to kill and eat a dog that they had seen on shore. The Governor of Mindanao arrested five of them, and sent them prisoners to Manila. The ship which the priest had cursed did at length reach Manila with a loss of nearly all her crew.*

Quiros took up the tale of discovery. Late in 1605, he sailed with two ships and a *zabra*, or launch. Quiros commanded the *Capitana*, of 150 tons, and Torres, famous as the discoverer of Torres straits, the *Almiranta*, of 120 tons. This time no women or children were carried. The expedition began very well. The ships ran through the archipelago to the east of Tahiti, discovering traces of what may have been the crew of the *Lesmes* in Chain island. If they had kept this course as Torres wished, they would probably have discovered New Zealand, and again the history of the world might have been writ differently ; but on December 21, Quiros came to the fateful decision to alter his course to the E.N.E. His hope was to sight Santa Cruz, and thence to steer southward for the continent, which he believed to lie behind it. On this course, he encountered Taumaco, the principal island of the Duff group, and acting upon the information given him by a native chief that there was land to the southward, he steered in that direction. For the moment, his dream seemed to have been realized. Island after island, mountainous and thickly inhabited, rose above the horizon. The islands of the New Hebrides, overlapping one another to the south-east, seemed to be a continuous coast-line, while to the south-west was the land which he named *Australia Del Espiritu Santo*. It was the largest island of the New Hebrides group, and with its commodious port and its inland mountains, it seemed to Quiros to justify the grandiose proceedings which he describes in his Memorials. To us these proceedings have a pathetic side. He took possession in the names of the Church, of the Pope, and of the King of "all those regions of the south as far as the Pole, which from this time shall be called *Australia Del Espiritu Santo* with all its dependencies for ever and so long as light exists." A great city was to be founded and named the New Jerusalem, and the river that discharged its waters into the port was to be named the river Jordan. Municipal and royal officers with

* 'The Voyages of Quiros, 1595-1616.' Hakluyt Society, New Series, vol. 14.

high-sounding titles were appointed and a Knightly Order of the Holy Ghost was instituted, subject to confirmation by the king. There were processions and religious dances and High Mass and fireworks. There was, indeed, only one drawback to his success, and that was the persistent hostility of the natives, who could not be induced either by fair means or foul to communicate with the Spaniards, except by throwing lances at them. Indeed, the settlement only lasted thirty-five days, for when the little fleet sailed with the object of making an exploration of the coast, a gale came on, and, while the *Almiranta* and the launch put safely back into the bay, Quiros' ship lost her way and was driven to the leeward of the island. His crew, though he does not himself say so, seems to have been mutinous. In the end, having failed to make Santa Cruz, he resolved to cross the equator and sail for Mexico. After waiting some days for him, Torres set sail for the west. He ran through the Louisiade group, along the south coast of New Guinea, through the strait that bears his name, and got safely to Manila.*

An incident, very puzzling to those who know the Pacific, followed the successful colonization of the Philippines by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1565. One of his pilots, Lope Martin Cortal, hoping perhaps to win favour from the Viceroy of Mexico by being the first to bring news, set sail secretly for Acapulco. The Viceroy received him kindly, and despatched him again to the Philippines with succour for Legazpi. One of the quarrels which marred every enterprise in which the Spaniards of that day were engaged, broke out during the voyage, and when Cortal and a party were on shore in the Barbudos, the mutineers set sail without him, and neither he nor his companions were seen by their countrymen again. It would not be true to say that they were not heard of, for when Quiros captured a native in the Banks group in 1606, forty years after the Spaniards were marooned, and asked him for information about "other lands," he pointed to several places on the horizon, counted on his fingers several times, and ended by saying, "Martin Cortal." † Now, if the Barbudos are correctly identified with the Marshall islands, Cortal was marooned 1200 miles from the island where his name was familiar to the natives. The incident is surprising, but it is not incredible. The natives of the Marshall atolls have always been navigators. They made for themselves very fair charts in the form of a wooden framework, to which seashells were tied to indicate the islands. Their tiny and barren atolls were no permanent abiding-place for so skilled and enterprising a navigator as Cortal, who may have built himself a launch, or have accompanied any canoe bound for the Gilbert islands, and by attaching himself to one chief after another, may have made his way from atoll to atoll until the trade wind carried him to the Banks islands. There, no doubt, he played no

* 'The Voyages of Quiros, 1595-1606.' Hakluyt Society, New Series, vol. 14.

† *Ibid.* Hakluyt Society, Second Series, vol. 4, p. 237.

minor part in the drama of native life. We know from the history of adventurers nearer our own time that the names of such heroes become embalmed in the native epics and endure for many years after they have met their end.

Quiros was the first navigator to use the condenser for supplying his crew with fresh water, but resource and skill in navigation avail little unless they are joined with the quality of leadership. The quaint style of his writings was an admirable index to his character, and if he was not the greatest of his countrymen of that age, he was certainly one of the most interesting. With his death, discovery in the Pacific passed into the hands of another nation.

During the closing years of the sixteenth century, the Dutch were forcing themselves into the foremost place of the seafaring peoples of the world. In 1581, they had renounced allegiance to the Spaniards, and were turning covetous eyes towards the Spanish main. De Cordes, who commanded a fleet of five ships of Rotterdam, left more than his share of castaways in the Pacific. The fleet had barely emerged from the strait when they were scattered by a tempest, and only one returned to Holland, and that with the loss of half her crew. Of the rest, one was taken by Spaniards, one reached Japan and was confiscated by the emperor,* one reached the Moluccas and was seized by the Portuguese, and the fourth disappeared in the North Pacific and was heard of no more. A pinnace they had built and manned with eight men was attacked and taken by the natives in an island that seemed to be one of the northern Ladrões.

Scarcely less disastrous was the voyage of Van Noort despatched from Holland in the same year. Of his four ships, one, the *Mauritius*, under the English pilot Melis, was the first Dutch ship to circumnavigate the globe. Another was abandoned in Brazilian waters; a third was captured by the Spaniards in the Philippines, and all the crew were executed as pirates, as indeed they had behaved; the fourth parted company soon after leaving the strait, and was never afterwards heard of. It is possible that she was cast away on Elizabeth island, for in 1851 a party of Pitcairn islanders who had taken passage in a whaler to explore Elizabeth, found the remains of an old wreck and eight human skeletons in one of the caves. There was no fresh water on the island except a little moisture dripping from the roof of the cave.† It is a pity that the examination was not more carefully made and recorded. There is not space here to describe the cruelties perpetrated by these ruffians in the course of the voyage; the character of Van Noort may be judged by his treatment of the Spanish pilot, whom he carried as a prisoner of war. "Although," says the journal, "he ate in the cabin, and the general showed him entire friendship, he had, nevertheless, the effrontery to say, because he found himself ill,

* Carrying as pilot William Adams, the first Englishman to settle in Japan.

† Pitcairn Public Register, 1851. 'Pitcairn.' By Thomas Murray. London: S.P.C.K.

that we wanted to poison him, . . . and therefore we threw him into the sea, leaving him to sink, to the end that he should not ever again reproach us with any treachery."

In the opening years of the eighteenth century the French almost monopolized the trade with the Eastern Pacific. Woodes Rogers, writing of 1708, says that in a year "there have been in the South sea seventeen French ships of war and merchantmen. The number of ships engaged in this trade seems actually to have glutted the market.* We know that several of these ships crossed the Pacific; we do not know how many failed to reach their destination.

Two incidents at this time have left their mark on English literature. In 1704, while the Cinque Ports galley, one of Dampier's vessels, lay at Juan Fernandez, Alexander Selkirk, the master, was put ashore at his own request rather than sail further with his captain. Four years later he was picked up by Captain Woodes Rogers, and his adventures furnished Defoe with material for 'Robinson Crusoe.' While Rogers was at the Galapagos islands, his third mate, Simon Hatley, with five seamen, four negroes, and an American-Indian, parted company in a Spanish prize, and though Rogers made a second visit to the islands and found traces there of an earlier wreck, we are told that nothing was seen of her. Nevertheless, ten years later, in 1719, we find Simon Hatley as second captain of Shelvocke's ship, the *Speedwell*. Of the passage round Cape Horn, Shelvocke wrote—

"We had not the sight of . . . one sea-bird, except a disconsolate black albatross, who accompanied us several days, hovering about us as if he had lost himself, till Simon Hatley, observing in one of his melancholy fits that this bird was always hovering near us, imagined from his colour that it might be some ill omen . . . and after some fruitless attempts at length shot the albatross, perhaps not doubting that we should have a fair wind after it."

This episode, quite the least important in Hatley's troublous life, gave him immortality as the prototype of Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner."

While the mariners of France and England and Spain were fighting one another for plunder, certain financial adventurers in London had found a less perilous way in which to turn the South sea to profit. Not one of the promoters or the shareholders of the South Sea Company had set eyes on the Pacific, nor did any of them concern themselves with the details of a scheme in which so many millions of money were invested. The bubble burst in 1720, and English enterprise in the unexplored ocean was ruined for a generation.

Two years later the Dutch sent a fleet into the Pacific under Roggewein, whose treatment of natives and Europeans alike shows him to have been of the same temper as the infamous Van Noort. One of his ships, the

* I. G. de la Barbinais, quoted by Burney, 4, p. 510.

African Galley, went to pieces on Tikei, one of the Paumotu islands,* and during the confusion a quartermaster and four seamen mutinied and deserted in order to escape punishment for mutiny. Roggewein sent a boat to parley and to promise them pardon, but, rather than trust themselves to his mercy, they threatened to fire on the boat's crew, which left them to their fate. In 1765, forty-three years later, Byron visited Takaroa, one of King George's islands, and relates—

“Our people, in rummaging some of the huts, found the carved head of a rudder which had manifestly belonged to a Dutch longboat, and was very old and worm-eaten.”

They found, beside, a piece of brass and some small iron tools. Takaroa lies some 40 miles from the island of the wreck: perhaps the longboat had carried these redoubtable Dutchmen, armed with muskets, on some mimic island invasion, and at Takaroa they had ended their days.

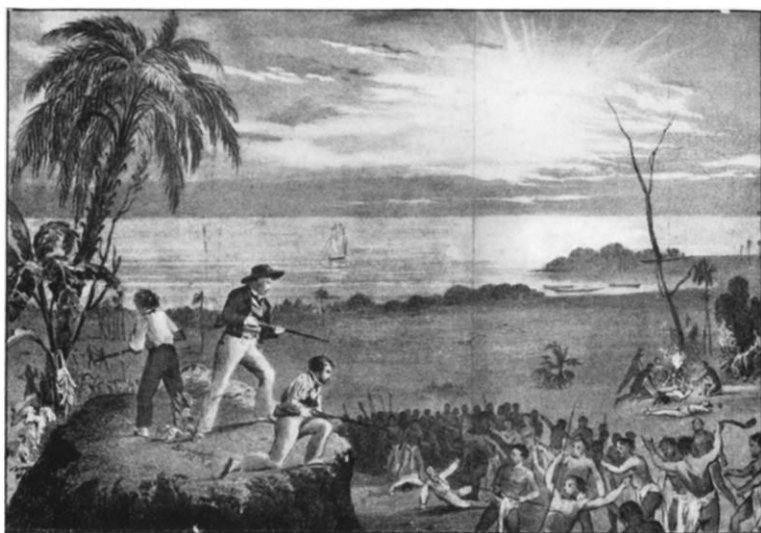
I will refer to the wreck of H.M.S. *Wager* in 1741 only as an illustration of the spirit in which the seamen of that century met their fate. The *Wager*, frigate, one of Anson's squadron, was cast ashore on the coast of Chili. It was the curious custom in the navy of those days that all pay ceased as soon as a vessel was wrecked, and some of the ship's company declared that as a natural consequence all obligation to obey the officers came to an end at the same time. Though his crew were insubordinate, Captain Cheap contrived to lengthen the longboat, and in this the greater part of the officers and men embarked for Magellan straits, leaving their captain and twenty men to find their way northward in two of the boats if they could. At length the boat-party reached a bay, from which it seemed impossible to escape. One of their boats foundered, and, the remaining boat being too small to take them all, it was resolved to leave four of the most helpless men behind. Arms and a few necessaries were tossed to them, and “as the boat departed these poor fellows, standing on the beach, gave us a farewell salute with three cheers, and cried, ‘God bless the King.’” But the saddest part of this moving story is yet to come. The boat was driven back, and she put into the same bay the following day, intending to take in the four men; but they had gone from the place, leaving some of their arms behind them, and they were never heard of again.

The next British ship of war lost in the Pacific was the *Bounty*. The story of the famous mutiny in 1789 has been too often told to need repetition; it is with the fate of the mutineers that we are here concerned. It is not often that we are able to compare the native with the European accounts of the same incident. On May 3, 1789, four days after the mutiny, Bligh was attacked by the natives of Tofoa, where he had landed for water and provisions for his famous boat voyage. During the attack, John Norton, quartermaster, was killed; the others escaped, though nearly

* Palliser sub-group. This identification is suggested by Burney, but it is not quite clear from Roggewein's narrative.



PITCAIRN ISLAND, INHABITED BY DESCENDANTS OF THE MUTINEER CREW OF
H.M.S. *BOUNTY*.



MASSACRE AT THE FEJEE ISLANDS IN SEPTEMBER, 1813.

From 'Voyage in the South Seas,' by Captain P. Dillon.



ALVARO DE MENDAÑA DE NEIRA.



PEDRO FERNANDEZ DE QUIROS.

all were wounded by stones. Seventeen years later Mariner visited the spot and heard the story from natives who actually took part in the murder. Their version was that Norton had an axe in his hand, and that a native carpenter, in order to obtain possession of it, knocked him down, and pounded his head with stones till he was dead. They then stripped the body and dragged it inland to a *malae*, where, after a few days' exposure, it was buried. They declared, further, that grass would never grow on the track along which the body was dragged, nor on the grave, and Mariner found colour for this superstition in the fact that the track, when he visited it, was still bare. The mutineers took the ship first to Tubuai, and having failed to establish a colony there, they sailed to Tahiti, where they told the natives that they had met Captain Cook at a neighbouring island, and that he had sent them back to Tahiti to wait for him. Fletcher Christian, lately the master of the *Bounty*, and now the leader of the mutineers, knew the danger of remaining at a place as well known as Tahiti, and, after landing all who wished to remain, he set sail for Pitcairn, with eight Englishmen, six Tahitian men, and thirteen women. Whether he made the island by accident or design, it is certain that no safer asylum could have been found. Pitcairn is harbourless and precipitous, and it was easy to make the settlement invisible from the sea. The first visitor to discover that there were people on the island was Captain Folger, of the American ship *Topaz*, who landed on the island in 1808, when John Adams was the only male survivor of the original settlers. His story, supported as it was by a MS. journal, that all the other mutineers, except Young, had died violent deaths is generally accepted, but it is to be remembered that he showed alarm for his personal safety when telling his story to Sir P. Staines in 1814; that he gave different accounts of Christian's death, and that there was no one then on the island in a position to corroborate or to refute his statements. I do not suggest that the whole of his story is untrue, but I do not think that any one can read the statements without doubting whether Fletcher Christian was really murdered on Pitcairn as he describes. From 1788 onward the Pacific was scoured in every direction by whalers, and for the next half-century even Pitcairn island began to lose its isolation. We have the statement of Peter Heywood, a ship-mate and fellow-mutineer, that in 1809, in Fore Street, Plymouth, he came suddenly upon Christian, who immediately took to his heels, and that there was a rumour current in the Lake District about that time that Christian had returned to England and was making clandestine visits to an aunt who lived in that neighbourhood.* There was nothing improbable in such a story. The MS. journal of Pitcairn records the near approach of a vessel in 1795, and there can scarcely fail to have been others.† Christian was a commissioned officer in the navy. He knew the danger he ran by remaining

* 'The Eventful History of the Mutiny and Piratical Seizure of H.M.S. *Bounty*.' London: John Murray. 1835.

† 'Pitcairn: the Island, the People, and the Pastor.' Thomas Boyle Murray. London: S.P.C.K. 1854.

at Pitcairn. In such company his identity could not be disputed, and the first British ship that called at the island would remain there until his companions surrendered him to save their own necks. But if he were to board a passing vessel in the character of a deserter from a whaler, what was to prevent him from returning to England under an assumed name and losing himself among the thousands of seafaring men in the ports? It may be significant that in 1814 Adams never referred to him but as Mr. Christian.

As soon as the news of the mutiny reached England the *Pandora* frigate was commissioned to find and arrest the mutineers. No enterprise could have been better devised for the discovery of remote islands. After embarking the prisoners at Tahiti, she sailed westward from island to island searching for traces of the *Bounty*. At Palmerston island the jolly-boat, manned by a midshipman and several men, parted company. As she was unprovisioned, it is probable that these unhappy men perished of hunger at sea, but it is just possible that they drifted to Savage island. When the *Pandora* appeared at Tahiti, the mutineers who had refused to sail with Fletcher Christian in the *Bounty* put to sea in a little schooner, which they had built of native timber, in order to evade arrest. Having removed her crew to the roundhouse, Edwards commissioned the schooner as his tender. The adventures of this little vessel, the first built by Europeans in the Pacific, deserve to rank with those of Bligh's famous longboat. Having parted from the *Pandora* in a storm off Samoa, when almost destitute of stores and water, Oliver, the gunner who commanded her, made one of the Fiji islands, probably Matuku, where he lay for six weeks with boarding nettings up. Thence he went from island to island westward, begging water and provisions from the natives, fighting for his life, and enduring such privation that the midshipman went mad. Reaching the Great Barrier reef at last, and despairing of finding a passage, these brave seamen set their course for the reef, and rode over it at high tide. A worse fate than drowning seemed to be in store for them. Mistaking them for pirates, the Dutch authorities clapped them into prison, where Edwards found them when he escaped from the wreck of the *Pandora*. The staunch little schooner was sold into the China trade, and for many years was employed on less eventful service.

The modern beachcomber dates from this period. In 1788 Enderby fitted out the whaler *Amelia*, and threw open the Pacific to vessels which left deserters on every beach where the natives appeared to be hospitable. Generally the runaway sailor became the harmless parasite of a reigning chief; sometimes, by the possession of firearms, he became a devastating scourge. A few of these men had the incredible wickedness to incite the natives to massacre a ship's crew and to take and plunder their vessel. Such was the Italian deserter who had planned the capture of Fanning's vessel in the Marquesas in 1798,* and Doyle, who carried out the murder of the

* 'Voyages Round the World,' by Edmund Fanning. London: 1834.

crew of the ill-fated ship *Duke of Portland* in Tonga in 1803.* Others, like Isaac Davis, boatswain of the *Fair American*, who was kidnapped by the Hawaiians in 1788, were content to be body-servants to native chiefs. The two Swedes, the survivors of the *Matilda* wrecked on Osnaburgh island in 1792, who acted as interpreters to Wilson of the *Duff* when he was in Tahiti, seem to have been quiet, inoffensive men.† It is not surprising that men of this stamp left no permanent traces of their sojourn in the form of new arts or institutions. Except in the rare instances when they were the only possessors of firearms in the island and became the guiding hand of some warlike chief, their influence was quite transitory. It was, however, generally disastrous to the reputation of Europeans, if we may judge from the native accounts of the proceedings of Charles Savage, whom the Fijians used to carry into action in a sort of arrow-proof fortress to make play with his musket,‡ or of that monster of iniquity, the ex-convict in Samoa, whom victorious natives carried shoulder-high naked, smeared with charcoal and oil, with the bleeding heads of those he had slain dangling from the litter. Fortunately, escaped convicts and runaway sailors who violated every law of decency and humanity generally died a natural death—that is to say, after a very few years of licence they were killed and eaten by the natives.

I have touched upon the fate of some twelve vessels carrying nearly five hundred souls who are known to have disappeared among the islands. I will mention the loss of two other vessels before closing this paper. We know now that in the course of his famous boat voyage Bligh actually passed within a few hours of the most famous of all lost explorers. The Comte de la Pérouse sailed from Brest in 1785. After a long cruise in the Pacific, in which valuable additions were made to the scientific knowledge acquired by Captain Cook, he put into Botany bay and handed over his journals to Governor Philip, who was about to found the first convict settlement in Australia, requesting him to have them conveyed to France. His two ships sailed in February, 1788, and were never seen again. The journals reached Paris in safety, and the National Assembly, then in the throes of the Revolution, found time to decree that they should be sumptuously printed at the national expense, and that a relief expedition should be despatched in search of the lost explorers. This was the famous expedition commanded by d'Entrecasteaux, which ended so disastrously. By a tragic accident the two ships actually passed within 9 or 10 miles of Vanikoro, the island where, as Dillon discovered thirty-five years later, there were then still survivors from the wreck. The romance of la Pérouse had seized the imagination of the French too firmly to be wiped out by the tragic events of the Terror. From time to time voyagers brought back

* *Ibid.*

† 'A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific Ocean in the Ship *Duff*,' by James Wilson. London: 1799.

‡ 'South Sea Yarns.' Thomson. 1894.

rumours of natives seen on remote beaches clad in French uniforms, of wreckage from French vessels seen floating in the sea, of a cross of St. Louis in the possession of naked savages. In 1826 Peter Dillon, the master of a vessel trading between Calcutta and Fiji, called at the island of Tucopia, where he had left a German and a Lascar thirteen years before. The Lascar had in his possession a silver sword-hilt, which proved on inquiry to have been bartered by the natives of Vanikoro, an island lying a few leagues to the southward; there, the natives declared, two large ships had been wrecked many years before.

The personality of Dillon had much to do with the ultimate discovery of La Pérouse's fate. He was a gigantic Irishman, with the virtues as well as the faults of his race—generous, imaginative, and observant, dictatorial, and hot-tempered. His physical stature combined with his masterfulness and intuitive sympathy, gave him enormous influence with the natives, and his infectious confidence and persuasive tongue prevailed with the Indian Government to put him in command of the *Research*, a ship specially chosen and fitted out for the undertaking. Having secured interpreters at Tucopia, Dillon made a thorough exploration of the shores of Vanikoro, recovering from the natives and from the reefs themselves guns, a ship's bell, and a number of metal objects stamped with the *fleur-de-lys*, that would have been carried only by ships of war. Though there was no positive proof that the *Astrolabe* and *Boussole* had been wrecked at this spot, the relics were sufficient to convince the French authorities that this was so. The story told by the natives was that on the morrow of a great hurricane two foreign ships were seen lying upon the reefs. The ship on Payau reef broke up about mid-day, and large pieces of wreckage floated to the shore. On one of these were four white men, whom the natives were about to kill, when they made a present to the chief, and he saved their lives. The bodies of many others, terribly mutilated by sharks, were afterwards cast up on shore. The ship that struck upon Wanau Reef went down, but a number of white men were saved, and these, with the help of the four from Payau, built themselves a fence of logs, in which they constructed a small vessel in about five moons. In this they sailed away, leaving two behind them, a chief and his servant. The chief died about three years before Dillon's visit (viz. 1824), and the servant was obliged to flee with his patron chief a few months later, none knew whither. Of the little vessel built by the shipwrecked Frenchmen, no trace will ever be discovered. She may have struck one of the sea reefs and foundered with all hands, or her crew may have been massacred by hostile natives.

One wonders why these two survivors would not embark with the rest; at what period of their captivity they abandoned hope of deliverance; how soon the most beautiful scenery in the world—of sunlit beach and feathery palm and cool forest glades—became hateful to them; whether the usage of the years had reconciled them to their savage life. While Time was whitening their hair, the Revolution, the Directory, and

the First Empire had come and gone, and not the faintest echo had reached them in their far retreat. In the petty business of getting food for their sustenance, they may have forgotten their country, but their country had not forgotten them. As Carlyle wrote, "The brave navigator goes and returns not; the seekers search far seas for him in vain. He has vanished trackless into blue immensity; and only some mournful mysterious shadow of him hovers long in all heads and hearts." *

Mr. DOUGLAS FRESHFIELD (Vice-President) in the chair, before the paper: I regret that our President, Lord Curzon, is not able to be here to-night. He would have been glad to listen to the interesting paper we expect from Mr. Basil Thomson, but he is unfortunately detained by the low state of the political barometer, a state only equalled during the last week by the low state of the physical barometer. The paper we expect to-night is one in some respects of unusual character. It will be mainly historical, treating of the more human side of geography. Mr. Thomson was for some time a Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, and has lately returned to a distinguished post in that body, but in the interval he has seen a great deal of public service in various posts in that most interesting portion of the world which has been made familiar to Englishmen by our great genius Stevenson—the South Sea islands. He will be able to talk to us about Fiji, the Solomon islands, Tonga, and others of these remote islands. He has already given to the public his experience in several books which are no doubt familiar to many here, 'The Diversions of a Prime Minister,' 'South Sea Yarns,' 'The Discovery of the Solomon Islands.' To-night he will deal with some of the romances and the tragedies which have been connected with the early exploration of the Pacific. I will not attempt to anticipate what he has to tell us, but will ask him at once to begin his interesting narrative.

Sir EVERARD IM THURN: I am glad of the opportunity of expressing our thanks to Mr. Basil Thomson for his interesting and useful *résumé* of the little that it has been possible to glean as to the men of our own race who, having ventured into the Pacific, there disappeared, without leaving any record of what they there saw and did.

The paper which we have heard to-night reminds one of the task of the Israelites, who made their bricks without, or at any rate with very little, straw. I suppose the bricks so made were quite useful bricks. At any rate, I am quite sure that the paper which we have just heard is a useful paper. For it probably throws as much light as can be thrown on a question which all thoughtful men, who have cruised in the backwaters of the South seas, must occasionally have put to themselves. In the more secluded of these islands, where one sees, or at any rate expects to find, natives of purest breed and least-mixed culture, one often comes across individuals, and even groups of individuals, whose features, whose form, and sometimes their culture, strongly suggests that somewhere in their ancestral stock there must have been introduced an individual of quite alien race.

Mr. Thomson's paper to-night has brought before us, if not the certain answer to that question, yet an answer which is all but convincing. It is difficult to doubt that it must have been the lost explorers who introduced the alien blood and culture into this otherwise very distinct strain of folk. For instance, it has been said that "the Marshall islanders were in the habit of making

* 'French Revolution,' vol. 1, p. 56.



Mercator's Projection.

PART OF
THE PACIFIC OCEAN
 to illustrate the paper
 by
BASIL THOMSON.



Equatorial Scale 1:50,000,000.
 Published by the Royal Geographical Society.



TAKEN BY COMMODORE ANSON FROM



Spanish Galeon from Manila to Acapulco
 Var 12° 10' E

Donna Maria Lazara

Isla de S^{ta} Francisco

Isla de Pajaros

Uta

Los Mazar

La Difer

La Mesa

of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe from Acapulco to Guam & from
 Var 6° 52' E

Var 6° E

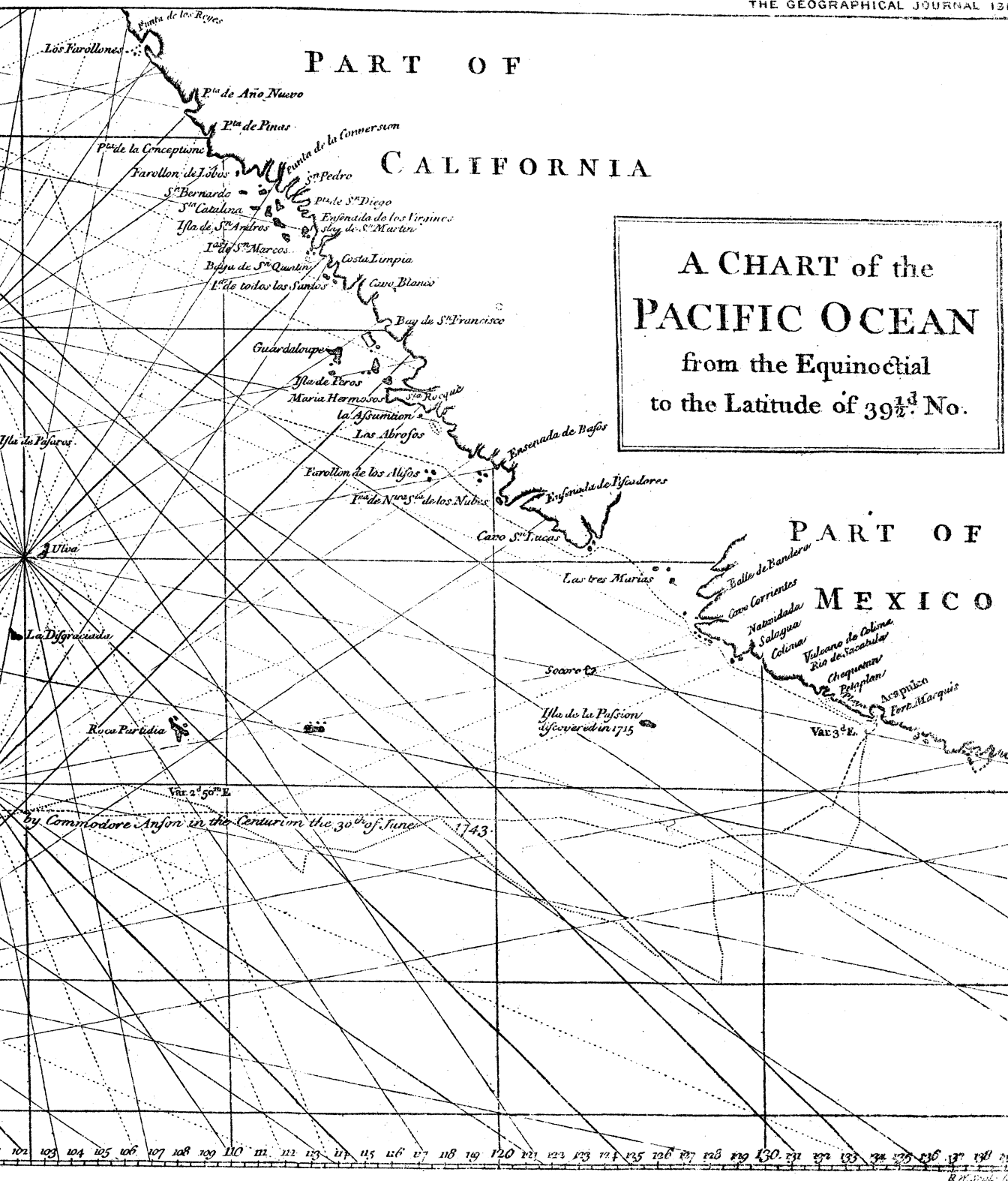
Ego de
Manuel Rodriguez

chance to the Philippine Islands where she was taken
 Var 4° 30' E

by Com

beginning the Longitude at Sⁿ Bernardino

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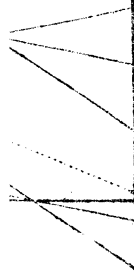
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137 138 139 140
W. M. Smith, 1887

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