THE FRENCH CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXPLORATION OF THE PACIFIC

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THE FRENCH CONTRIBUTION to the EXPLORATION OF THE PACIFIC IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

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(History)

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PREFACE

THIS THESIS is an attempt to examine and correlate the voyages of the French in the Pacific Ocean during the latter part of the eighteenth century. So far, no study of this kind has been attempted, most recent research work in France and Australia being directed towards problems of colonisation and administration. Existing modern works on eighteenth-century French voyages are very sparse, usually limited to broad accounts of individual voyages or to biographies, with little recourse to unpublished sources. Even studies of importance, such as the Swedish historian Dahlgren's work on trading voyages, remain little known: it is still customary, for instance, to refer to Bougainville as the first French captain to complete a circumnavigation, whereas in fact he was the eleventh.

To set this study within the proper historical perspective, it has been necessary to give a brief summary of early western attitudes of mind towards the problem of the Pacific, to summarise contemporary knowledge of the Pacific, particularly that of the French, and to review those factors - often overlooked or neglected - which contributed to the developing awareness of the Pacific among the French in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries : the activities of buccaneers, adventurers, traders and scientists. French eighteenth-century policy towards Pacific problems has been examined in detail by Dahlgren, but his work did not go beyond 1715; French archives, especially those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, remain largely untouched, but anything more detailed,

than the introductory chapters of this thesis, which comprise 101 pages, would have led to unwieldiness or to a lack of balance, and the political background has been only lightly touched on.

The voyages are examined according to the following pattern: their origin and their political or economic background, the plans and instructions, the main participants, and a narrative of the voyage itself. Discoveries and landfalls are discussed, and the geographic, political and personal consequences of each expedition bring the various chapters to an end.

A short survey of post-Napoleonic voyages concluded the thesis and links it to existing studies of the colonial period.

The preparation of this thesis has been complicated by the paucity of documents available in New Zealand. It seems to be indeed the first time that any study of a major French political or historical problem has been made in this country. In carrying it out, a preliminary survey of sources available in New Zealand was followed by two years' full-time, and another two years' part-time study. Not all printed works, and only a small proportion of the relevant manuscripts on microfilm, were available in this country; it was obviously necessary to obtain many more on microfilm. A few documents were to come from England, some from French provincial towns, the great bulk from Paris. This necessitated lengthy and protracted correspondence with government and municipal officials in France on whose goodwill success depended. In spite of these difficulties, a great deal was achieved, though after long delays. In some cases, journals

or documents known to have existed were found to have been mislaid or misfiled; in others, the absence of correct information as to their location has hampered a search. A scheme to obtain microfilms through the New Zealand Embassy in Paris, using funds placed at its disposal by the N.Z. Government for this purpose, failed through the inexperience of the officials involved and their frequent reposting to other countries. Nevertheless, this failure is not so serious as might at first appear; for, when a microfilm was eventually received, it proved to duplicate to a considerable extent material already received through other channels. Documents not used in this thesis will inevitably come to light, but it is doubtful whether they will invalidate any of the broader conclusions now reached. If anything, the difficulties encountered in the preparation of the thesis prove that a study of this kind can be completed in New Zealand if one is prepared to pay the price in slow and detailed correspondence, and by importuning a large number of people abroad who, it should be stated, are often prepared to help far beyond the limits of their duty, and to an extent that only a devotion to history itself can explain.

It is impossible to acknowledge the help of all those who have assisted in many ways, large or small, but a debt of gratitude is due to Dr. J.C. Beaglehole, who supervised the work, and to the staff of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, through which incoming documents were channelled.

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Part One

THE BACKGROUND

I

The Precursors.

Remote and immense, the Pacific did not yield its secrets until the eighteenth century. The Spanish had discovered it when Balboa climbed his peak in Darien, and soon after this their men conquered the western coastlands of South America. Magellan was the first to sail across the immense waters, and Spanish merchants sent cautious galleons to follow a regular route from Central America to the Philippines. The Dutch, with mercantile deliberation, settled in the East Indies, whence they despatched captains on journeyings that outlined the continent of New Holland on the blank maps of their age. The British first appeared in the Pacific in sporadic, spectacular, piratical raids until, conscious as a nation of the prizes that might await their conquerors under the shelter of the green palms, they despatched scientific explorers, merchants and missionaries. The French, having stumbled on a mysterious land in the sixteenth century, were obsessed by it when their time came to enter the South Sea. And when the shadowy land faded in the swirling fogs of the icy south, national pride, stung by the defeats of the Seven Years' War, and quickened by their rivalry with Britain, drove them doggedly into the further corners of the Pacific, and along its lesser known coasts.

The exploration of the Pacific was therefore not the work of one man or of one nation, but of Europe. There was so much to discover - from the off-shore clusters of islands to the tiny atolls, sprinkled over enormous areas of tropical seas, from the closed world of Japan to the secrets of Polynesia.

The distances were so great that they were complete barriers to the coast-hugging ships of pre-compass days, and all that could be done, was to speculate on the existence of lands and continents beyond the equator - but even speculation was restricted by the scope of man's mind. Could the world extend beyond the limits imposed by medieval philosophy, limits which reason itself appeared to dictate - for was it after all, reasonable to expect human beings to be found living underneath the world?

During the Middle Ages, the main obstacle was a theological one. Although Claudius Ptolemy, writing in Alexandria a century and a half after the birth of Christ, had delineated an unknown Southern Land on a map of the world, his work remained largely unknown and unwanted by the medieval scholars, who based their own cosmography on their reading of Holy Writ and on the commentaries of the fathers of the Church. To claim that there were islands beyond the reach of ships, was

to believe that men were living beyond the reach of Christian redemption, and to doom millions to ignorance and possible damnation.

Maps were simplified into schematic circular maps in which the main districts of the world were compressed, usually with little regard for their size or respective situations, and so new discoveries had to fit into the accepted pattern, until eventually they exploded it into another shape. In 1459, one of the last defenders of the orthodox map, Fra Mauro, found it impossible to insert the new islands of the East. Leaving out, among others, Borneo, the Celebes and the Philippines, he excused himself ingenously: 'In this Oriental Sea' he wrote, 'there are many great and well-known islands that I have not set down because I have no room.' (1)

Traditional and medieval culture were to receive rude shocks when the clash with the power of Islam brought into the heart of scholasticism the knowledge of mysterious lands beyond the horizon. The Crusades, the travels of Marco Polo, and trade with the Moslems opened the door to a wealth of knowledge and faery that the Western mind, with its self-contained theology, had not allowed itself to imagine.

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(1) G. Collingridge, The Discovery of Australia, p.7n.

The Arabs, reborn in a new dynamic religion, had carried out explorations beyond the normal boundaries of their desert sheikdoms. While their host poured into Europe in an attempt to conquer the infidel, their traders crossed the Sahara, raided deep into the Sudan and, striking East, reached the fabled land of Cathay. (1)

Nor was enterprise limited to the Arabs, for evidence exists that Chinese ships were sailing into the Persian Gulf during the fifth century (2), while considerable trade was carried out between China and India, whose own people were beginning to spread out towards Cambodia, Java and Sumatra. (3)

These travels enabled Arab geographers to revise their theories of the world, and news of their discoveries were brought to the West by fighting men and by traders - the Genoese had opened a trading post in Tunis in 1223 - awakening the somnolent belief in an Austral land, which religious orthodoxy had never really subdued, and which Marco Polo, bringing back tales of great islands south of the China Seas, confirmed and confused at the same time.

The older order fought back for another two centuries. Tradition dies hard, particularly when facts are few, and the evidence unreliable and often contradictory. The Renaissance finally swept it all away in a quarter of a

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(1) See Geo. H. T. Kimble, Geography in the Middle Ages, p. 122.
(2) J. Hornell, 'Sea Trade in Early Times', in Antiquity, September 1941, pp. 233-56.
(3) Ibid. pp. 250-1.

century, spurred on by the invention of printing that enabled the dissemination of maps old and new.

All the new maps - and of the large number that were printed between 1477 and 1570 a good proportion has survived - showed in one way or another a great southern continent. The tradition became ingrained in the minds of geographers and, although this great continent shrank in size from time to time, it was not until Cook had criss-crossed the blank spaces of the maps that the theorists were defeated.

Thus it happened that, whereas Columbus had set out to discover a new route to an old continent, and had stumbled accidentally upon the unknown one that barred his way, the early explorers of the Pacific - and particularly the French - were seeking a definite new continent in whose existence they firmly believed, and which was to prove itself one of the most tenacious fictions of history.

True, there was Australia, and it was this which, together with the Indonesian chain, had probably given rise to the tradition. Nicolas Baudin, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, met Malay fishermen looking for trepang off the coast of Australia, and he realised that the great land

that the Malays had known at least as far back as the sixteenth century was in fact Australia. (1) This knowledge, confused and vague, mingled with tales from the Indonesian archipelago, had worked its way back to China, to India and to Arabia. But even Australia was not the real southern continent which, in the minds of the geographers, stretched from the tropics down to the Antarctic, and from the western edge of the Indian Ocean right across the restless immensity of the Pacific. On the real South Land would be found as many nations and kingdoms, as many riches and articles of trade, as Europe herself encompassed. It was a dream of gold, of strange races, of entire populations to be saved for Christ, of wealth and of conquest. There both El Dorado and Utopia had their last refuge.

Man, once he has accepted a belief, does not take long to collect arguments to strengthen it. Whereas some years earlier the southern continent had been illogical and even heretical, it now became not only likely, but necessary to the balance of the world; science now needed Terra Australis to explain the spherical earth. Just as some inspired map makers in the Middle Ages had shown Europe, Asia and Africa with a fourth and unknown continent added to preserve the symmetry of their diagrams, so later physicists required an

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(1) 'It can therefore be presumed that they [the Malays] discovered New Holland perhaps many centuries before the Europeans themselves knew of the existence of the great Asian archipelago.' F. Péron, Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes', Vol. II, p. 248

antipodean continent to counterbalance the land masses of Eurasia and of Africa. Without it, the world would topple over. This was the equilibrium theory that led both armchair and sailing geographers to believe that a continent ought to be found in the South Pacific, and for some to hold on to that belief even when appearances began to tend to the contrary.

Yet, all was not empty theorising; there were some shreds of evidence. Reason, after all, required more evidence than the mere need of keeping the globe on an even keel. If a large continent existed such as the rumours reported and cosmographers needed, then some of the European navigators who were, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, travelling across known seas should at least find occasional indications of the presence of land. There were several, such as Juan Fernandez in 1576, who was reported, however unreliably, to have discovered land along the fortieth parallel, or Theodor Gerards, driven by a tempest into sight of snow-covered mountains somewhere to the south of Cape Horn.

The most circumstantial and tantalising account, however, concerned an earlier landfall by a French sailor at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It was reported in more sober terms than were most journeys of his day, with just enough information to make it credible, though not enough to make it verifiable. Although no immediate attempts were made to return to the land claimed to have been visited during this voyage, belief in its existence greatly influenced the French during the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and gave rise to several expeditions to rediscover it. It provided at once evidence of the existence of a great continent, and opportunities for trade enhancing the wealth as well as the prestige of France.

The Espoir, 120 tons, had left Honfleur in Normandy on 24 June 1503. Its motley crew of 60 officers, men and adventuriers was commanded by Binot Paulmyer, of the Buschet de Gonneville family, members of the low nobility of France. (1)

Eighteen days later, the French reached the Canaries and at the end of July landed at Cape Verde, where they remained for ten days. Because the destination of the expedition was not firmly fixed - they were going à l'aventure to find wealth and lands as yet unknown, along the route that Vasco de Gama had pioneered five years earlier - there is some speculation about the direction in which they sailed after leaving Africa, but it seems likely that they went south-south-west, crossing the equator in early September.

On 9 November, they found quantities of floating seaweed, and this, so the two Portuguese who had joined the expedition to lend the experience they had gained on a previous voyage assured them, was a sign that they had reached the neighbourhood of the Cape of Good Hope.

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(1) Even ~~that~~ so much is in doubt. C. Breard, in Notes sur la famille du Capitaine Gonneville, navigateur normand au XVIe siècle (Rouen 1885,) believes that the captain's correct name is Binot.

At this stage disaster struck. Contrary winds drove them off course time and again, and after three weeks their chief 'pilote' died. A violent storm followed, and the crew, sick and terrified in unknown latitudes, allowed the small ship to drift helplessly at the mercy of the waves and currents. When the gale and the mighty swell calmed down, they neither knew where they were nor, strangely enough, had the courage or the ability to find out. There is no record of a reckoning of latitude, something that was by no means beyond the power of a navigator of the time. Instead, they looked for signs of land and, observing a number of birds flying to and from the south, set sail in that direction. On 5 January 1504, they reached what, for want of a better term, we shall call Gonneville Land.

Here they were well treated by the natives, and spent six months refitting their ship and laying stores for the return journey. This was begun in July, and this time two new-comers joined the expedition - Essomeric, a son of the local king, and another 'Indian', who was presumably Essomeric's attendant.

They did not see land again until three months later. This apparently was the coast of South America, though which part of it is not easy to say, as no latitudes are given. They decided to obtain local goods to bring back to France in order to recover the capital invested by the owners, a sure indication that, whatever Gonneville Land may have been, it was not commercially profitable. This last fact was often overlooked by the geographers, who were pressing in the eighteenth century for expeditions to the Southern Continent, where, so they declared, riches of all kinds, known and unknown, awaited the bold adventurer.

In February 1505, the Espoir recressed the Line, reaching the Azores in March. The French found that their troubles were not yet over; as the ship limped home up the Channel towards the Norman coast, an English pirate appeared and, in an attempt to escape, the Espoir foundered off the Channel Islands. Twenty-six of the original sixty reached France, together with Essomeric - the other Indian, Namoa, having died on the way.

The ship's papers, such as they were, had been lost in the ~~ship~~wreck, together with various gifts from the inhabitants of Gonneville Land, that would have identified that country for us. Fortunately, the slight hope that some restitution might be obtained from the English helped to prod Gonneville into making an affidavit before the naval authorities, that remains the only evidence of the entire enterprise. (1)

Gonneville's account was accepted, but no one was willing to support another expedition to the new land, least of all the Honfleur merchants, who had lost so heavily on the first venture. Map makers, when they were aware of his journey, included Gonneville Land on their maps; we find, for instance, in 1648, when interest in Gonneville was re-awakening, Louis de Mayenne Turquet showing it in the region of the fifty-second parallel, in the neighbourhood of Kerguelen Island. Generally speaking, however, the journey itself remained in comparative oblivion until well into the seventeenth century.

The captain, unable to gain any support for a return voyage to the new land, could not keep a promise he had made to Essomeric to return him, in time, to his people. To compensate for this, he adopted him into his own family, gave him a relative in marriage, and died, still dreaming of the South.

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(1) 'Déclaration du Végage du Capitaine Gonneuille et ses Compagnons ès Indes,' 19 June 1505. An authenticated copy dated 30 August 1658 is still extant in the Arsenal Library, Paris; it was reprinted in 1869 by M. d'Avezac.

There the tale might have ended, and indeed have been lost, had it not been for the fact that a century and a half later the French, chronically short of money for their national finances, were collecting a tax on all foreigners who had settled in France, and who had not been naturalised.

The descendants of Essomeric found themselves in this category, and they decided to fight the case at law on the grounds that they were not descended from a foreigner who had voluntarily settled in the country, but from one who had been brought there on the false grounds that he would be returned to his homeland; alternatively that the promise to return him had been made in good faith, but had been subsequently broken by the French. They won their case.

This event had one result of importance to others, for it preserved for posterity a copy of the affidavit signed by Gonneville after his shipwreck. It also revived interest in the whereabouts of the southern land.

Shortly after this, a descendant of Essomeric, Jean Paulmier de Courtonne, canon of St. Peter's at Lisieux, put forward a plea for a missionary expedition to his people. In spite of the support of high Church dignitaries (1), the plea came to nothing.

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(1) including St. Vincent de Paul. The atmosphere of the time was favourable to the establishment of missions. The French Société des Missions Etrangères was founded in 1663, the year in which Paulmier's pamphlet was published. The Roman Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith was already established, dating from 1622.
See P. O'Reilly, Le Chanoine Paulmier de Courtonne et son Project d'Evangélisation des Terres Australes,

but it did bring the Espoir's journey to the notice of the public, as the pamphlet included a detailed account based on old Gonneville's affidavit of 1505. (1)

The difficulty was that the fifteenth century 'Declaration' did not give any indication which might enable geographers to identify Gonneville Land - neither latitude nor estimated longitude, and no bearings of any kind. However worthy Father Paulmier de Cortonne's missionary efforts may have been, they foundered on the fact that neither he, nor anyone else, knew from which part of the world his ancestor had come.

There were innumerable guesses, ranging over most of the Southern Hemisphere, from the east coast of South America to Madagascar and New Zealand. Bénard de la Harpe believed he had really landed in North America, (2) but even a cursory perusal of the 'Declaration' will disprove this. Kerguelen, who searched in vain for Gonneville Land, returned with the conviction that the landfall had been Madagascar. La Borde believed it to have been not far from New Zealand (3), Laplace favoured the west coast of Africa (4).

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(1) Mémoires touchant l'établissement d'une Mission Chrestienne dans le Troisième monde autrement appelé la Terre Australe, Méridionale, Antartique et Inconnue, Dédiez à Notre S. Père le Pape Alexandre Vll, par un Ecclesiastique Originaire de cette mesme Terre. first impression 1663, second 1664.

(2) Bénard de la Harpe, Mémoire pour la France servant à la découverte des Terres Australes, cinquième partie du Monde, pp. 11-13, B.N., N.A.F. 9341-Cn 117-379.

(3) Histoire Abrégée de la Mer du Sud, pp. 73-81.

(4) Voyage autour du Monde, Vol. 1, p. 181.

In time, doubt was cast as to whether Gonneville had actually turned the Cape of Good Hope. (1) In 1783, following the publication of Kerguelen's account of his voyage, a certain Baron de Gonneville, hoping to gain favour with the Minister of the Navy, wrote to him expressing his belief that a certified copy of the declaration could be found among the old family papers of the 'present owner of the Gonneville estate situated a league from Honfleur.' (2) He was encouraged to unearth this, succeeded in so doing, and a copy was duly forwarded to the Ministry. (3) The wording did not indicate that the Espoir had passed the Cape, but that it merely reached that latitude. (4) This difference was glossed over, and this version was rejected as a poor transcription resulting from the Baron's inexperience, ~~and~~ one which added nothing to what was already

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(1) 'Adoubla the Cap des Tourmentes'.

(2) Baron de Gonneville to Minister of the Navy. 23 March 1783 BN.,NAF.9439.

(3) Baron de Gonneville to Minister of the Navy, 30 April 1783 BN.,NAF.9439.

(4) 'Estant à la hauteur du Cap des Tourmentes' ...

known. (1) It did in fact hold the missing clue, but nearly a hundred years passed before it was correctly interpreted.

In 1847, a French scholar, Pierre Margry, found in the Archives of the Marine the copy made by the unlucky Baron. Noting the difference in the wording, he put forward the theory that Gonneville had never reached the Indian Ocean, but had in fact landed somewhere in South America, having followed Vasco de Gama's advice to take advantage of the westerly winds further south. (2)

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(1) The Baron, became rather discredited, but continued his researches right up to the beginning of the French Revolution, unearthing charts of islands 'situated in the Austral Sea' , compiling a list of discoveries allegedly made in the Pacific between 1503 and 1785, and drawing up a fanciful genealogy of Essomeric, which he forwarded to Fleurieu. His letters are kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale, N.A.F.9439, and at the Service Hydrographique de la Marine, Cn.117, No. 17.

(2) Les Navigations Françaises et la Révolution Maritime du XIVe au XVIe Siècle, printed in 1867, pp. 159-60.

It was in this way that Cabral in 1500 had stumbled upon the Brazilian coast, while on his way to India.

Shortly after this, however, an authenticated copy of the 1505 affidavit came to light in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, proving that the Baron de Gonneville had been right, and that the Abbé Paulmier had been careless. The Espoir had apparently never reached the Cape.

On this evidence, Mr. d'Avezac, who edited that affidavit, was able to construct an elaborate theory confirming Margry's earlier work. (1) The floating seaweed is found in the south-west Atlantic, and the prevailing winds would have driven the ship further north-west to the coast of South America.

Yet, although d'Avezac made a thorough use of the descriptions left by Gonneville, he could not fail to leave some unexplained questions.

Did the Abbé Paulmier base his work on a family tradition that the Espoir had actually entered the Indian Ocean ? In his affidavit, Gonneville was careful to omit any detail that might lead to the identification of his discovery. It was a normal and wise precaution calculated to prevent some other young voyager from reaching Gonneville Land, and stealing the fruits of his discovery, but it would be strange if he had not, at some time before his death, passed on to his family all that he knew of his journey.

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(1) Campagne du Navire L'Espoir de Honfleur 1503-1505, Relation authentique du Voyage du Capitaine de Gonneville ès Nouvelles terres des Indes (Paris 1869), in which the 1658 authenticated copy of the original affidavit is reprinted under the title: Déclaration du Végage du Capitaine Gonneuille et ses compagnons ès Indes, (sic).

The promise he had made to the local king to return his son Essomeric to his homeland after a few years in France remains another imponderable. If Gonneville did not know where he was, how could he make such a promise? It is clear that he had no doubt that he could easily find his way back to Gonneville Land, but it is doubtful whether he believed himself to be in Brazil, a country already known to the Normans and where, not many years later, the French were to make an abortive attempt to settle.

A settlement was actually made in 1530 at St. Alexis under Duperet and de la Motte, but it was destroyed by the Portuguese jealously defending their nascent empire. (1) In 1555, two ships under Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon left le Havre, and formed a colony where Rio de Janeiro now stands. Two years later, more immigrants arrived under Villegagnon's nephew, Bois le Comte, this time from Honfleur, Gonneville's own town. The colony, called 'France Antarctique' foundered when religious disputes divided it, and the Portuguese finally wiped it out in 1566. It had been a Norman settlement, reflecting the local interest in the Brazilian mainland where for many years French ships had been obtaining 'bois-de-brésil,' monkeys, parrots and feathers, in the face of growing Portuguese opposition. Both Essomeric and Gonneville were dead by then, and the period of the Wars of Religion would hardly have been a propitious time for a missionary venture to foreign parts, even if Essomeric's French-born descendants had felt inclined to return to the land of their fathers.

(1) Ch. de la Roncière, Histoire de la Marine Francaise, vol. 111, pp. 280-2.

What is strange is that, in spite of the fact that the Paulmier de Gonneville family lived in the province where interest in Brazil was so keen (1), and therefore knowledge of South America would have been more reliable than in other towns, Essomeric's great-grandson, an educated Norman cleric, should have personally believed that his ancestors had come from a southern land east of the Cape, and not from the obvious place - Brazil.

Be that as it may, the French entered the age of Pacific exploration with the Gonneville tradition firmly established. To many, the task was not so much the exploration of unknown spaces, as the rediscovery of a lost continent. It might have been better if they had turned their attentions to the East, instead of to the South. There were more precedents for it.

In 1527, the Marie de Bon Secours had left Rouen for Diu, an island south of Saurashtra in India, but in the Portuguese sphere of influence. It was only one of several ships engaged in trade with the Indian sub-continent, a dangerous enterprise, as it infringed the Portuguese monopoly granted by the Pope in the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, a judgment of Solomon that divided the New World between Spain and Portugal.(2)

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(1) For a description of a 'fête brésilienne' held in Rouen in 1550, see ibid., vol. IV, p.10.

(2) Ch. de la Roncière, ibid., vol.III, pp. 268-9.

In 1529, two ships, the Sacre and the Pensée, left Dieppe for Sumatra, from which they returned richly loaded after a singularly fortunate voyage.

The possibility of ships from Dieppe having reached China a few years later cannot be excluded, (1) so that during the sixteenth century the Orient was opening out to the French as much as to other European nations. However, although tales of the wonderful and fabulous East were not wanting, they availed little to the French who soon found themselves outdistanced by the Dutch in the East Indies, and outmanoeuvered by the British in India. The real lure was the mysterious South, a tantalising continent, and a persistent mirage that was spurned only by scientifically-minded sailors like Bougainville and La Pérouse, out of the many French navigators who ventured towards the Pacific in the eighteenth century. (2)

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The first Frenchman to enter the Pacific were the nineteen anonymous sailors who had joined Magellan's fleet, though none of them survived. (3) Since ships have always

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(1) For a discussion of possible early French voyages to China, see P. Margry, Les Navigations Françaises et la Révolution Maritime du XIVe au XVIe siècle, pp. 183-91.

(2) For a single abortive sixteenth century French voyage to the South Land, see p.24, infra.

(3) J. A. Robertson (ed.), Magellan's Voyage around the World, vol. I, p. 204.

sailed with crews of mixed nationalities, it is likely that other Frenchmen entered the ocean in the sixteenth century under the Spanish flag, but there are no records to vouch for this.

All was silence until 1608, when a forty-year-old Breton expatriate, Pierre Olivier Malherbe, returned to Paris with tales of fabulous eastern kingdoms. After some years in Spain, he had apparently gone to Peru, travelling overland from Mexico, and had then embarked on a ship bound for the mysterious islands of Solomon. The expedition was shipwrecked off the coast of Patagonia, but Malherbe somehow got across to Canton, presumably via the Philippines. He spent several years in India, where he met the great Akbar, and later continued his world tour overland to the Middle East where, after further adventures, he found a ship which took him to Marseilles.(1)

How much of this story was true, no one has discovered, but there is nothing unlikely about a pseudo-Spaniard, as he claimed to be, making his way to the New World. His claim to have sailed on an expedition to the islands of Solomon appears at first to be a fabrication, but it is not entirely improbable that he joined an unofficial group of adventurers who were attempting to reach the islands, some time between Mendaña's voyage of 1595 and Quiros's of 1606.

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(1) 'Le Premier Voyage Français autour du Monde', by Ch. de la Roncière, in La Revue Hebdomadaire, September 1907, pp. 22-36; also, de la Roncière, Histoire de la Marine Française, vol. IV, p. 288. E.W. Dahlgren was inclined to doubt Malherbe; see Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, p. 86.

Malherbe may have been followed into the Pacific by Jean Baptiste de la Feuillade, of Rouen, who may have crossed the Pacific from the Moluccas, and been wrecked in the Straits of Magellan in 1667, but again whether this voyage ever took place remains open to question. (1)

It is far more probable that the first ship to enter the Pacific under the command of a Frenchman belonged to a group of buccaneers, for it was they who, in the 1680's, sailed into the waters which had, so far, known only the flags of Spain, Portugal, Holland and England. The French had never recognised the Treaty of Tordesillas; Francis I, rejecting all the implications of the Treaty, had enjoined French privateers 'to proceed against the Spanish and the Portuguese in such a manner as may best secure their own advantage, until the said Spanish and Portuguese shall suffer trade to be free within the boundaries of the said lands and seas of the Indies and of America, and shall give them free entry and access to that end into these countries, and into the ports and harbours of the same, that they may traffic and do business there.' (2)

For many years, Francois's hopes were fulfilled only along the eastern seaboard of America, but the Dutch Wars of 1672-8 had given a strong impulse to the corsairs, and, when peace came, some of the privateers joined the pirates of the Caribbean, and at last attacked the rich and ill-defended South American

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(1) A single mention of this voyage is made by the Spaniard Francisco de Seixas y Lovera in his Théâtre Naval Hydrographique, published in 1704; an account is given in J. Burney's Chronological History, vol. III, pp. 269-70.

(2) Maurice Besson, 'Scourge of the Indies,' p. 4.

colonies along the Pacific coast, just as the Englishman Drake had done before them.

One of the best known of these adventurers, owing to the account of his voyages that was published on his return to France, was Ravenau de Lussan. (1) A Parisian, he had taken part in the siege of Condé but, being unemployed after the war, had made his way to Santo Domingo, where he had joined the filibusters.

They decided to try their luck in the Pacific, where other buccaneers had obtained considerable booty. Leaving their ship, they travelled overland across the isthmus of Panama, and fell in with a large group of Englishmen and Frenchmen, who had come through the Straits of Magellan. (2) The buccaneers, over a thousand in number, disposed of ten ships, under the command of one David, (3) an Englishman whose correct name was Edward Davis, (4) and who later was to play an important part in the story of the Pacific. Others in the expedition were Captain Swan, of the Cygnet; Captain Townsley; Captain 'Brandy', who was probably that Bradely who had sailed with Henry Morgan; and William Dampier, who was to become the most famous of them all. They carried out successful raids against

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(1) Journal du Voyage fait à la Mer du Sud avec les filibustiers de l'Amerique en 1684 et années suivantes, Paris, 1689. See also Dalhgreen, Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, pp. 90-5

(2) Ravenau, Ibid., p. 63.

(3) Ravenau ~~de Lussan,~~ Ibid., p. 60

(4) Both Ravenau and Alexandre Oexmelin (or Esquemeling) state that David came from the Low Countries. 'Of all these commanders, there was only Capt. Grognier who was French, all the others belonged to the English nation, except David who was Flemish'. Ravenau, Ibid., p. 61. Oexmelin who also went to the Pacific with buccaneers

the wealthy settlements, which relied more on their inaccessibility than on their military preparedness for their defence. The Viceroy of Peru did gather a fleet which he dispatched against the raiders, but the French and the English repelled it without great difficulty and inflicted heavy losses on the Spanish.

Thieves, however, usually fall out, and the assembly of pirates of which Ravenau was a member was no exception. It is worth recording that the subject of the dispute - religion - was an unusual one for men engaged in rapine and murder. The Roman Catholic French objected to the desecration of churches, crucifixes and holy statues, which Protestant Englishmen regarded as popish abominations. There were no doubt other, more sordid, reasons for the breakup, and all that is certain is that the loose confederation fell to pieces, and that, in January 1688, Ravenau and his compatriots returned the way they had come.

It was far less troublesome for the buccaneers to attack

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(4) cont'd. ....gives David's first name as John; see his Histoires des Aventuriers qui se sont signalés dans les Indes vol.I. p.183. There is little reason, however, to doubt Philip Gosse's identification of John David as Edward Davis; P.Gosse, Pirate's Who's Who, p.104. A possible explanation for the confusion may be that Davis' ship, the Batchelor's Delight, had been captured from the Danes, and this fact could have become distorted by some confused buccaneers into a statement that Davis came from the Netherlands. See also on this P.K.Kemp and C.Lloyd, The Brethen of the Coast, pp.87-138.

the Spanish ships in the Atlantic, as they sailed from the mainland for Spain with the treasure that had been brought from Peru and Chile, than for them to enter the lonely Pacific. The realisation of this fact, and the energetic efforts that were made to reduce the activities of pirates at the turn of the century, meant that the South Seas were again comparatively safe by the 1700's, but the French incursions had awakened the dormant attention of shipowners and merchants to the possibility of trade with the rich seaboards of the Pacific. 'The idea of these enterprises [to the Pacific] is certainly due to the stories of filibusters' expeditions to the South Seas.' (1)

Among the former buccaneers who returned to France to spend the proceeds of their semi-respectable labours was one Massertie (2), a native of Bordeaux, who wrote an account of his operations in the New World between the years 1683 and 1693. He gained the ear of Jean-Baptiste de Gennes, a naval officer who was later Governor of the West Indian island of St. Christopher. Massertie extolled the riches of the golden West, and stressed the ease with which they might be garnered. No doubt, he saw himself playing an important part in any expedition that might set out, and there may also have been a real dash of patriotism in his enthusiasm.

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(1) Dahlgren, Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, p.89

(2) Sometimes misnamed Macarthy and dubbed an Irishman. Dahlgren, Ibid; p.99n.

And now events favoured his proposals. Spain was weakened by the struggle between the pro-French and the pro-Austrian parties and, in spite of the untimely death of Charles II's French wife in 1689, the ability of Louis XIV, with whom ascendancy over Spain had become an obsession, kept French influence paramount in Madrid. Furthermore, the Spanish policy of exclusiveness might end at any time, and it was therefore important to maintain respect for the French in the Spanish colonies, in case trade between France and these possessions could be started, leading to the opening of a westward route into the Pacific.

On 3 June 1695, de Gennes sailed from La Rochelle with six ships bound for the Pacific and lucrative trade. He had the king's blessing, a complement of 720 men and a total of 156 guns, enough to force the Spanish authorities to respect him if they showed themselves reluctant to honour the letters he carried. (1) The French had not reckoned on Nature, which was still on Spain's side. De Gennes entered the Straits of Magellan in February 1696; ~~and~~ six weeks later he was still there, battling against the contrary winds, the tides, the storms.

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(1) The full list, as available, of these and later expeditions will be found in 'Voyages Français à destination de la Mer du Sud avant Bougainville (1695-1740)' by E.W.Dahlgren, in Nouvelles Archives des Missions Scientifiques, vol.XIV. Further details, and notably the political implications, will be found in Dr. Dahlgren's Les Relations Commerciales et Maritimes entre la France et les Côtes de l'Océan Pacifique (Commencement du XVIIIe Siècle), vol.I, Paris, 1909. The projected second volume of this work never appeared.

He was less than half-way to the western outlet; he had fallen out with one of his captains; the crews, which had already suffered from scurvy during the crossing of the Atlantic, were by now reduced to eating rats to vary their diet of worm-eaten biscuits. De Gennes turned back, defeated, and, in April 1697, limped into La Rochelle.(1)

The expedition was not an absolute failure. It was a salutary warning of the practical difficulties which barred the way to regular trade with the South Sea, should it ever become legalised. Nor were de Gennes' struggles in the Straits completely wasted. The French had had no reliable first-hand knowledge of navigation in these intricate channels: the trail was now blazed, at least to the half-way mark.(2)

Louis XIV let the matter drop for the time being. The Peace of Ryswick had just ended the War of the League of Augsburg, and he was planning his next move, which was to lead to the War of the Spanish Succession. If Charles II, whose death could not now be far away, should leave Spain to a French king, as Louis anticipated, then the Pacific trade would be opened to France, and the experience gained by de Gennes could be put to useful purpose.

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(1) Dahlgren, Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, pp.101-2.

(2) An account of the voyage, by François Froger, appeared in 1702.

In 1698, not long after de Gennes' return, a plan had been put forward by a Sieur de Beaujean to sail round the world by passing through the Straits of Magellan or Le Maire (1); in the following year de Voutron asked for 'two medium size ships, good sailers,' food for fifteen months, and a small vessel for coastal work, (2) for the same purpose. But such plans were premature, it was only the traders willing to hazard their own capital who stood any chance of success. With a minimum of delay, Jean Jourdan, a wealthy merchant whose machinations criss-cross the pattern of the entire French South Sea trade at this time, organised an expedition to the Pacific, of which de Gennes was to be the commander. There were to be seven ships, a total crew of 689 men, together with officers and soldiers. Insufficient capital forced him to reconsider this grandiose plan, and it was agreed by all except de Gennes that only four ships could be financed.

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(1) 'Proposition de faire le tour du Monde,' 'Mémoire du Sieur de Beaujean à M. de la Touche,' B.N., N.A.F.9341.

(2) Letters from de Voutron to Minister of Navy, 10 February and 3 October 1699. B.N., N.A.F.9341.

De Gennes, whose difficulties in the Straits of Magellan had persuaded him that only a fully-organised expedition on a large scale could succeed, resigned, and the command devolved on de Beauchesne-Gouin. (1)

They sailed from La Rochelle on 17 December 1698. Within a very short time, their number was halved; the Bonne Nouvelle was forced to return after being severely damaged in a storm, while the Nécessaire was wrecked off the coast of Brittany. The other two waited for them for some time in Brazil, before going down to the Straits, which they entered in June 1699 - mid-winter in the Southern Hemisphere. They spent an astonishing six months there, during which they took possession of an island they named Ile Louis-le Grand (2), and, on 21 January 1700, after suffering greatly in the cold and barren straits, they emerged into the Pacific.

They speedily sailed up to Callao where the viceroy of Peru issued strict orders that no trading was to be allowed. These instructions were completely ignored, and the French did a roaring trade. Later, in Guayaquil, they met with similar success, selling all the goods they had left, even those which had been damaged during the long voyage. They made for home in January 1701, this time rounding the Horn, and went up to Rio de Janeiro, one ship towing the other whose rudder was damaged. By August they were back in France.

(1) More correctly Jacques Gouin de Beauchesne. The four ships were the Phelipeaux, the Comte de Maurepas, the Bonne Nouvelle and the Nécessaire. See Dahlgren's Relations Commerciales and Maritimes, pp. 123-46

(2) Later known as Isla de Carlos III.

In spite of its success on the coast, the expedition still resulted in a financial loss - it disappointed Jourdan, who had had more success with the Amphitryte which had returned from China the year before - but it was valuable in many other respects. It proved that trade with South America was possible in spite of the official Spanish policy of exclusiveness. Beauchesne, who was an able sailor, had explored the Straits of Magellan and drawn careful charts of the little-known waters. He had also discovered Beauchesne Island, to the south of the Falkland Islands, and this name still remains today as a tribute to his work. As de la Roncière comments, 'one could not stress too strongly the scientific results of this voyage, with charts of the straits of Magellan by the ingénieur Duplessis; drawings in colour of the fauna of the Pacific ....ethnography and linguistic study of the natives of Tierra del Fuego, nautical lore of the South Sea Indians who used strange craft made of bundles of reeds.'(1)

Beauchesne's pioneering expedition had prompt results: within a short time, the race began - a test of French mercantile ingenuity. It was at times possible to obtain permission to sail into the South Sea (2) but, failing this, a captain could leave with the connivance of the local officials, or simply conceal his real destination. The whole trade broke the monopoly of the 'Compagnie des Indes,' which had had the Pacific

(1) Ch. de la Ronciere, 'Les Antilles', in Histoire des Colonies Françaises et de l'Expansion de la France, (ed. G. Hanotaux and A. Martineau), vol. I, Ch. II, p. 426.
(2) The French referred to the Pacific as the South Sea, while the British normally used the plural South Seas.

included in its charter, and objected to others availing themselves of opportunities that lay beyond its own powers. Soon a tangle of legal suits, official orders and counter-orders, enmeshed all the participants. Traders and lawyers, accustomed to move with ease within the fitful workings of a creaking administration, spent their time erecting innumerable compromises. An intense diplomatic activity tried to reconcile the clamorous demands of the French shipowners with the equally vocal complaints of the Spanish merchants.

The situation was complicated by the fact that Charles II had named Louis XIV's grandson as his heir and that, upon the death of the Spanish king in 1700, the Duc d'Anjou, as Philip V, had ascended the Spanish throne. Europe was now at war over this very question, and France and Spain found themselves side by side as allies. The Spanish argued, not without reason, that this did not justify the infringement of a Spanish monopoly which provided much-needed revenue for the Spanish Treasury, but the French pointed out with realism that the Spanish navy was not strong enough to police the colonies, and that the presence of French ships in South America would ensure the continued loyalty of the colonists to the Bourbon cause.

In fact, the war in progress held as its prize the Indies trade; the French would obtain it from a Bourbon victory; the British hoped for it as a reward for their championing of the rival pretender, Charles of Austria. Although things did not turn out quite so neatly as either wished, this line of thought controlled official policy.

The traders were less willing to await the outcome of the war. There were prizes to be had, all the richer for the dislocation of Spain's regular trade and the weakness of her navy. The Phélipeaux and the Comte de Maurepas had shown that large squadrons were not necessary and, although ships would sometimes travel together for safety and convenience, they usually left singly.

In October 1701, Julien Bourdas sent the St. Paul, a vessel of 230 tons with a total complement of 50 men; a few days earlier, Noel Danycan had sent the Président de Grénedan and the Comte de la Beyodère, of 250 tons each. (1) The St. Paul had sailed from St. Malo, ostensibly bound for the Canaries, but, 'finding it impossible to sell its goods there,' it sailed on to Peru. The excuse was so implausible that the captain was afraid to return direct to France: he sailed instead to Portugal, where the silver was unloaded safely, out of reach of the king's officers. (2) On 8 June 1703 the ship arrived in Marseilles, where the crew was speedily paid off, while the captain travelled overland to render account of his profitable stewardship to Julien Bourdas.

The Grenédan and the Beyodère had reached Concepcion at the end of March 1702. The French were most cordially welcomed by the Spanish in the belief that they had come on an official goodwill mission, but their hosts were rapidly disabused

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(1) Dahlgren, Relations commerciales et maritimes, p. 152
(2) Ibid., p. 250-1

when the visitors started to trade.

Their success encouraged others to follow suit. A month after the Grenédan and the Beyodère had returned to France, three ships (1) sailed for the South Sea on behalf of a syndicate of St. Malo merchants. They entered the Pacific not by the Straits, but by Cape Horn, and thus earned the distinction of being the first French~~men~~merchantmen to have done so from east to west. Their number proved useful for, when the faster ship St. Joseph reached the island of Juan Fernandez, she fell in with the Englishman Dampier, and a combat began, which Dampier quickly abandoned when he saw two more French sails appearing on the horizon.

The Spanish were neither pleased by their arrival, nor impressed by their exploit against the English raider. They considered three ships rather too many, particularly in view of the recent visit of Danycan's expedition. Nevertheless, trade was carried out satisfactorily on a basis of friendly bribery and contraband, and when the ships left Callao in September 1704 the captains had every reason to be satisfied.

Shipowners from other towns now began to rival St. Malo. In December 1703, the St. Pierre left Toulon (2) on the south coast, also bound for the Pacific. Some ten days later, Noel Danycan sent out two more ships, the St. Charles and the Murinet, on a voyage that is significant for the fact that passengers for the Pacific were carried for the first time, an

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(1) The Baron de Breteuil, the St. Esprit and the St. Joseph, with a total complement of 321 men.
(2) Or possibly Marseilles. Dalhgren, Ibid., p. 311.

indication of how regular a service was now being provided. The travellers were four Jesuit missionaries bound for China, who thought it safer to travel westwards. 'The war carried on by France at that time against the maritime powers had greatly impeded her navigation, so that her ships were obliged to go to China by the way of the South Seas, which is indeed the best and surest route to follow,' wrote the Scottish book-compiler John Callander. (1)

Callander was over-enthusiastic. No French ship had yet crossed the Pacific, and Father Nyel and his companions went on to Manila in Spanish ships. (2)

The Spanish did not object to the trans-shipment of worthy missionaries, but they were beginning to feel that the Pacific ports were becoming too open. At the beginning of 1705, there were no fewer than five ships trading in Peru at the same time. But the French ignored all protests; they had good reason to, since their high profits were reputed to have reached 450 per cent. By September, four of the ships had left, and they crowned what was a highly successful venture by the discovery of islands in the south-east of the Falkland group, to which they gave the name of their shrewd and prosperous sponsor, Danyean. These were in all probability Sea Lion Islands,

(1) J. Callander, Terra Australis Cognita, pp. 227-31.
(2) The French Jesuits had also to contend with the hostility of the Portuguese entrenched at Macao, who viewed with distaste the missionary efforts of the French in China, and who sought to bar their entry into the celestial kingdom. This had at first diverted French attention towards Siam, but, when French influence in that kingdom grew too strong, the missionaries were forced out, and made a second and more successful attempt to enter China. See J. F. Cady, The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia, pp. 4-8.

a small group south of East Falklands. (1)

If the voyage brought his own island as well as wealth to Danycan, it left him the delicate task of placating the authorities. These, however, were relenting; for, in July 1705, permission was being granted to sail 'à la découverte' - a euphemism which deceived no one, and which did not fail to give rise to a sheaf of protests from Madrid. It marked the start of a rush to the South Sea. In the ten-year period between 1695 and 1705, a total of twenty-two French ships had sailed either openly or secretly for the Pacific, but thirteen sailed in 1705, eleven in 1706 and thirteen in 1707.

The French minister of the Navy, Pontchartrain, ignored or shelved the Spanish protests, as the rapidly worsening situation in Spain enabled him to do. If Pontchartrain can be said to have had a policy at all in this matter, it seems to have been to allow as many expeditions to sail to the Southern Ocean as was possible without alienating France's supporters in Spain, and to preserve a semblance of legality in the permits issued to the fortunate few.

As it was, fortune did not smile all the time. The Falmouth, an English ship captured in 1704, and bought by the irrepressible Danycan, proved a poor investment. It was captained by Danycan's brother, Joseph, had a crew of

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(1) Dahlgren, Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, pp. 312-3n.

198 and, carrying 56 guns and gauging 500 tons, it was one of the largest ships that French merchants ever sent towards the Pacific. But the supplies were insufficient, food was bad, and, as they entered the Straits of Magellan, 170 men were sick. It was useless to attempt the navigation of the channels in this state, and the Falmouth painfully made her way back to the Plate. A boat was despatched to Buenos Ayres to get help, as it was plain the ship could not reach harbour. When the first boat failed to return, another was despatched, only to meet with an unfriendly reception from the Spanish, who were not sorry to see their unpopular rivals in trouble. When help finally came to the stricken ship, it was found that those sailors who had been left behind had died, and that the cargo had been pilfered by Indians. Only twenty of the original crew of 198 eventually returned to France.(1)

Size indeed seemed to have engendered ill-luck. The Philip V, the largest French vessel ever to sail to the Pacific during this period, was wrecked on the African coast to the north of Cape Verde, and the captain, many of the officers and 60 men died before the remnant of the expedition managed to struggle into a French settlement.(2)

For the most part, the commanders kept to the beaten track, but some found it expedient to try alternative routes, while the growing importance of the traffic led some merchants

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(1) Dahlgren, Ibid., pp. 365-6
(2) Ibid., pp. 368-70.

to try to widen the scope of the expeditions. The Maurepas, the Toison d'Or and the St. Louis, which left Penmarch in July 1706 on behalf of the resurgent 'Compagnie des Indes Orientales,' decided not to attempt the navigation of the Straits of Magellan, but to go through Le Maire's, thus setting a precedent for future voyages. Trade they found poor at first, because of the severe competition at Concepcion, where there were no fewer than eight ships at the same time, but they were more fortunate at Valparaiso and Callao. The normal trading pattern was to sell goods of French manufacture to the Spanish settlers against either silver or gold, with a proportion of Eastern goods brought to South America by the Manila galleons. On this occasion, it was proposed to send the three ships to India in the hope of engaging in a three-way trade, while bringing help and comforts to the Company's settlements in India.

The shortage of supplies foiled this plan, and the Maurepas returned with the Toison d'Or to France, leaving the third ship to go alone to India. The St. Louis sailed from Concepcion at the end of December 1707, veered towards South Africa after turning Cape Horn in January, and sailed on east-north-east, roughly between the 35th and 40th degrees south. On 19 March 1708, she arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, and became the first ship to have travelled direct between the world's two best known capes. After spending a month at Ile Bourbon to refit, she went on to Pondicherry, where she remained until February 1709. The voyage had been marred by dissensions between the leaders, the captain being replaced after a

dispute with the Company's representative. Needless to say, it was financially unsuccessful.(1)

Its real importance lies not so much in having blazed a new route between two continents, interesting though such a 'first' may be, but in having sailed across an unknown area of the South Atlantic over which the southern continent was supposed to extend, and in having thus pushed back further the limits of the hypothetical Terra Australia.

Shortly before this expedition, Danycan had put forward a proposal (2) to send three ships from Cape Horn across the southern Pacific to New Holland (3), and thence to the Philippines. It was a voyage that would have foreshadowed James Cook, had not the wind systems, about which Danycan knew very little, made it quite impracticable. Perhaps it was never seriously envisaged, except as a pretext for obtaining a permit to sail to South America, and thence direct to the other Spanish possessions in the north-west Pacific. Danycan's real purpose was to encroach on the last Spanish privilege of supplying the South American colonists with Eastern goods by way of the Philippines.

Danycan, like other French traders at the time, had realised what profits could be made by ships that would not only bring goods from France to South America, but

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(1) ibid., pp. 378-9, 390-5.
(2) 'Danycan to the Comte de Pontchartrain,' 1705, quoted in Dahlgren, ibid., p.169.
(3) Australia. The name New Holland dropped out of use from the 1820's.

also obtain cargoes from China for sale to the Spanish colonists. The Eastern trade had been carried out by the annual Manila galleon, which made its way across the Pacific to the Californian coast by a well-known traditional route. The French now proposed to compete with the Spanish by sailing from South America to China with the proceeds of the sale of the cargo they had brought from France. They would then, in most cases, return to Peru with Chinese goods, sell them to the colonists, and then return home with record profits.

This particular trail was blazed by the St. Antoine which left in January 1707 under the command of Nicolas de Frondat, and thus became the first French ship to cross the Pacific. (1)

The Spanish traders felt, with some justification, that their monopoly was now being damaged to a degree that would prove completely ruinous to their entire colonial economy. Their grievance was strengthened by the prompt departure of further French ships for the China Seas.

Michel Joseph du Bocage de Bléville,(2) who arrived in the Découverte shortly after Frondat, did not return to France for nine years. He had come on an official mission

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(1) Ibid.,p.175; Dahlgren, 'Voyages Français' No.48.
(2) 1676-1728. He left France in 1707, returning in 1716, having made so much money from his trading exploits that he promptly retired from the navy, and enjoyed a life of ease until his death 12 years later.

but stayed to trade on his own account, going on to China and to the East Indies. He is credited with having discovered l'Ile de la Passion, (1) a claim that has also been made on behalf of Martin de Chassiron who travelled to China in 1711 in La Princesse (2)

Some captains, instead of returning to South America after trading in Chinese ports, went home by way of India, thus completing the first French circumnavigations of the globe. No fewer than ten ships are listed (3) as having sailed around the world during this brief period, thus metamorphosing the Pacific seaboard of South America from a closely guarded bastion of the Spanish empire into a mere stopping place on the trading routes of the world.

Little is known of the first ship to complete the round voyage, the Grand Dauphin, beyond the bare fact that she left France in January 1711, and two years later arrived at Canton, where the captain, Sebastien Dufresne died, the ship then being

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(1) Clipperton Island.

(2) See Dahlgren, Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, pp. 556-8

(3) Le Grand Dauphin, (twice), La Grande Reine d'Espagne, Le St. Louis, Notre Dame de Lorette, Le Comte de Lamoignon, La Comtesse de Pontchartrain, Le Jupiter, Le Marquis de Maillebois, Le Pontchartrain, (a smaller vessel than the Comtesse.) The case of the St Domingue (Dahlgren, Voyages Francais, No 169) is doubtful. The Brilliant returned to France, but under escort.

taken home by the officers, to reach St Malo on 28 July 1713. The Grande Reine d'Espagne arrived in Canton two months after the Grand Dauphin (1), and the route she followed became the standard one for China-bound merchantmen (what she in fact did was to adopt the rough track of the Manila galleon.) After spending nearly a year on the Spanish coast of America, she sailed on 16 November 1712 for Guam and Canton river, leaving again in November 1713. The journey home was made in eleven months, by way of the Malacca Straits, the Ile de France, Ile Bourbon, the Azores, Cadiz and Lisbon. The principal owner, Julien Bourdas, learned of her successful return to St Malo on 23 October 1714.

The Comtesse de Pontchartrain, under Jean Baptiste Forgeais de Langerie, accompanied by the Brillant captain Jacques Louvel, performed a variation on the theme of the China trade by going to the East first, and to America last. In accordance with this plan, they passed through Sunda Straits on 25 August 1714, just under six months after leaving St Malo. A month later Canton was reached, and the slow process of selling French goods to the Chinese began. On 7 September 1715, they sailed away with a cargo of Chinese goods, passed to the north of Formosa, near the southern tip of the Ryukyus, and tried, apparently without success, to land for water at Okinawa. Tres Marias Island was sighted on 26 October and, after a brief stay, they continued their trading journey to Arica in northern Chile. The Pontchartrain sailed for home on 10 November 1716, but did not reach St Malo until 22 November 1717.

(1) Dahlgren, Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, p.662; Dahlgren, Voyages Français, No.78; Frézier, A Voyage to the South Seas, p.31.

The Pontchartrain was thus the first ship to encircle the globe from west to east, a feat no one accomplished again until Cook's second voyage nearly sixty years later. The Brilliant did not share this honour, for, having delayed a few days longer than the Pontchartrain on the Spanish American coast, she fell a victim of a Spanish punitive expedition, the Martinet expedition.

The Spaniards had long been trying to stop these continual French incursions, but as long as the war lasted they stood no chance of success. As we have seen, the permissions granted by the French government for expeditions ' à la découverte' in 1705 had given rise to numerous voyages in the immediate following years. Louis XIV himself did not overlook the political value of the metal lying uncollected in the Spanish colonies. His diplomats answered official Spanish objections to the voyages with some logic, by pointing out that the Spanish navy was no longer capable of collecting the gold and silver from America, that the colonists were suffering in consequence, and that the French were, in fact, rendering a service to Spain.

There was another important consideration, the only one the Spanish were willing to accept. And this was the growing danger of disaffection among the American colonists, and the possibility of a coup in support of the Austrian pretender. If this should come about, it would be practically impossible to subdue the rebels without the full mastery of the high seas and, even if the continental struggle finally ended in the Bourbons' favour, the reconquest of South America would still present great difficulties.

For this reason, the Aurore, a fast frigate under de la Rigaudière Froger, had been sent, at the end of 1706, with orders to the Spanish officials in South America to take all precautions necessary to prevent agitation and disaffection. Froger had not met with all the co-operation he had hoped for, and ~~that~~ the importance of his mission warranted; this was particularly the case in Lima:

'All that I can say about this good treatment is that they have done all they could to put us off, and to remove any desire we may have of ever returning to these countries.'(1)

He had, however, brought back a large sum on behalf of various traders, and of the religious orders which frequently acted as bankers in the Spanish colonies, but the Viceroy had refused to hand over to the Aurore a sum estimated at one and a half million piastres collected on behalf of the king of Spain.

In August 1707, similar considerations had led to the despatch of two more French ships on an official mission - the Aimable commanded by Michel Chabert, and the Oriflamme, commanded by de Courbon Léger. This was the so-called Chabert Squadron. ~~Her~~ Its official task had been to obtain information on conditions in the colonies, and to assist the loyalist troops if a revolt should take place. Another aim, less blatantly advertised, had been to obtain the sum of one million piastres from the estate of the late Viceroy, who had left an enormous

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(1) Journal, 14 March 1708, quoted by Dahlgren in Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, p. 404.

fortune, which the Spanish king suspected to have been the the proceeds of corruption and malpractices.

The Oriflamme was struck by scurvy, and having lost an enormous number of her men - 139 out of a complement of 300, with another 91 too sick to work - had been forced to leave Chabert at Cape Horn, and to return to La Plata. The Aimable had continued on her way, called at various ports along the Pacific coast, and returned in 1709, escorting back to France a convoy of seven French merchantmen. The attempt to persuade the Viceroy's heirs to part with any portion of their fortune had failed, but the traders in the convoy had brought back a total of 30 million livres in gold and silver.(1)

Spanish merchants very naturally objected to what amounted to official protection of French traders by ships of the French Navy. To refute French statements that their view of the extent of the unofficial trade with the Pacific coast was based on exaggerated reports, they printed a protest with full details on the contraband trade along the Peruvian coast. This compelled

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(1) See, on la Rigaudière and Chabert, Dahlgren, ibid., pp. 401-64.

the French government to take notice, with all the more grace in that the inevitable had happened - prices had fallen in South America as a result of the increased volume of goods, profits were therefore much smaller, and the ardour of the French shipowners was beginning to cool.

What the French were really hoping for was some concession in the commercial field, in exchange for an enforced ban on expeditions to the South Sea, but they were disappointed in this - the Spanish wanted an unconditional return to the pre-war status quo. The upshot was that, although the French government agreed to ban the trade to the Indies in 1711, the ban was ineffectual and traders continued to despatch ships as before. Large sums were involved, and the bribery of local officials weakened an already incompetent administration. The French government, furthermore, in all its dealings with the Spanish Court, was fully aware of the difficulty of enforcing a general prohibition, particularly in wartime, when captains could sail for an unknown destination in the guise of privateers.

As long as the colonists were willing to trade with the French, the temptation to send more ships remained; for the Spanish authorities on the coast, even when they were willing, were not always able to enforce the law in the face of the united forces of the armed merchantmen, which often outnumbered the Spaniards.

The main exception to the official French ban had been made in favour of the expedition of Duguay-Trouin, who left St. Malo in 1711 to attack Rio de Janeiro. The venture had been financed by French merchants to the extent of 1,200,000 livres, and Duguay-Trouin was authorised to include one ship in his squadron for the South Sea trade. This vessel, the Prince Heureux des Asturies, returned to St. Malo after a successful voyage, and brought back three million piastres.

It would have been against human nature for the traders to have resisted the temptation to send more than this single ship. Arguing that some of the goods captured from the Portuguese were 'only good for the South Sea trade', a rather questionable statement, Duguay-Trouin loaded the loot on two ships, the Concorde and the Notre Dame de l'Incarnation, and sent them to Peru, where the goods were sold without trouble. The French had not had to pay for them in the first place, and the price at which they were sold did not concern them very much, but the net profit on this transaction amounted to 92 per cent.

The Peace of Utrecht, which formally ended the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713, removed all excuses for sending French ships to the Pacific. The commercial advantages which Louis XIV had hoped for did not materialise - the British obtained the monopoly of the slave trade with the American colonies for a period of thirty years, while Spain reverted to her policy of exclusiveness. It was a defeat that the French had already conceded during the preliminary negotiations,

and a complete ban on the South Sea trade had been imposed in January 1712.

Little notice was taken by the shipowners. The aftermath of war still left Spain disorganised, and powerless to enforce its laws. Ten ships left in 1712, and thirteen to fifteen the following year. And 1714 was the most active of all the years of the South American trade; peace had brought some security from enemy privateers and, with it, a rebirth of France's overseas trade; sixteen different vessels are listed as having left France for the Pacific at this time.

The Spanish themselves finally took the measures required in order to end it all. Arguing that it would be unwise to request the British or the Dutch to assist them, since the result might well be the replacement of one evil by another, the King of Spain called on his French cousin. Three ships were chartered - the Conquérant of 700 tons, the Triomphant and the Pélerine, each of 600 tons, to which was added the Pembroke, probably an old British prize, which was bought in France. The total complement of French and Spanish sailors exceeded 1500. The command was entrusted to J.N. Martinet, and the punitive expedition left Cadiz in December 1716.

The French had taken good care to warn their compatriots, (1) but, either through over-confidence or sheer disbelief, the warning was ignored. Martinet was entirely successful;

(1) The Bellone, Captain Kerguelen, a relative of the later explorer, left in 1716, returning the following year. She had been despatched by the Government, possibly for this purpose.

six ships were captured, including, as we have seen, the Brilliant, which was accompanying the Comtesse de Pontchartrain on its eastward navigation, but which had tarried on the coast.

The trade was brought to a standstill. No ship left in 1717, and the only one to depart in 1718 was captured by the Spanish at the Plate.

By then a new and powerful personality was overshadowing France's Indies trade. John Law, the Scottish financier, had persuaded the Regent to support his financial schemes. A 'Banque Générale' had been established in 1716, and it met with instant success. Law, with a vision far ahead of his time, next turned his attention to North America and, in 1717, he established the 'Compagnie de la Louisiane ou d'Occident'. Two years later, this company absorbed the moribund 'Compagnie des Indes Orientales,' thus obtaining, on behalf of the national bank, general control over French trade in the East as well as in the West Indies.

The bank solved, for the time being at any rate, the chronic problem of under-capitalisation which had plagued the older companies. Whereas in 1719 the Compagnie des Indes owned only 16 ships, by June 1720 the mammoth organisation had 300, either bought, built or on order. (1)

Meanwhile, Spanish policy under Cardinal Alberoni had forced France into the Quadruple Alliance together with France's old enemy, Britain, in order to counter Spain's Italian ambitions.

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(1) P. Bonassieux, 'Les Grandes Compagnies de Commerce', p. 278.

When war ensued, the French merchants hoped for a re-opening of the Pacific trade. The Sage Solomon left St. Malo for the Pacific in May 1719, and returned after a speedy and successful voyage, but John Law was now at the helm, with great powers and no intention of allowing any infringement of the monopoly of the Compagnie des Indes. The older companies had found their privileges ignored because their own resources did not enable them to make full use of their charters. Law laboured under no such disadvantage. He despatched eleven ships, the main group leaving in September 1720.

Full advantage was taken of the experience gained under Louis XIV, many of the captains - G. Jolif, J.B. le Gobien, Laurent Battas du Chesne - having previously commanded Pacific-bound ships for private syndicates. Yet the attempt failed, two of the ships, the Découverte and the St. Jean Baptiste being captured by the Spanish, others returning without having sold their cargo.

Luck was no longer favouring the French. Law's schemes collapsed, he himself fled abroad and, although the Compagnie des Indes survived and indeed prospered, notably in India, until its dissolution in 1770, the company made no further attempt to capture the South American trade. It virtually ended with a final French ban in March 1724 and the failure in 1725 of three ships to penetrate the Spanish defences. (2)

(1) P. Bonassieux, 'Les Grandes Compagnies de Commerce,' p. 278.
(2) The St. Louis and the Flessingois were captured or sunk by the Spanish. The St. François managed to return to France.

Isolated French ships appeared on the Pacific coast in the early 1740's, but they were under charter to Spanish merchants and - final blow - captained by Englishmen. (1) Probably the only exception to this was the Condé, which left St. Malo in November 1745 under Le Hen Brignon, and went to Chile via Le Maire's Strait, taking on two and a half million piastres for Rio, and returning to St. Malo after a peaceful crossing.

The French, once they lost their precarious hold on the western Pacific trade, found the door closed to new attempts. Some succeeded in trespassing on the Spanish monopoly in the East. To do this, they had to resort to involved and expensive subterfuges - a lascar crew, the neutral flag of a small state, and Spanish agents who posed as the owners in Spanish waters while the French assumed the role of officers or interpreters. Bribery was such an important part of the costs that the trade was never very profitable or extensive. (2)

The Spanish occasionally employed French 'pilotes' or captains on the galleons trading between South America and the Philippines (3), but their role was unimportant, and

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(1) Notre Dame de la Délivrance, Louis Erasme, Le Marquis d'Antin; Dahlgren, 'Voyages Francais', Nos. 171, 172, 173.
(2) See W. L. Schurz, 'The Manila Galleon', p. 135-6.
(3) Such as the Nuestra Senora de la Encarnacion y Desengano, commanded by Jean Presberty, formerly factor of the French trading post at Canton. On the other hand, some claims must be rejected, e.g. the Buen Consejo was not commanded by a Frenchman (Schurz, op.cit., p. 411) but by a Spaniard, Don Juan de Caseins (le Gentil, Voyage, vol. I. p. 18, and vol. II. p. 780.)

hardly affected the broader problem of official French entry into Pacific waters. After the last French merchantman (1) crossed the Pacific to China in 1717, the French flag was seen no more in the South Sea for another half century - until Bougainville opened a new chapter in French naval history.

In the heyday of the Spanish trade, between 1698 and 1725 a total of 168 French ships had sailed to the South Sea; (2); of these 117 had returned, the majority after very profitable voyages; of the others, 26 were sold in America, 12 were wrecked and 13 captured. What the trade had meant to the French economy can only be guessed at, the records being totally unreliable, but the gain must have been very considerable. Of far-reaching importance was the effect these voyages had on the slowly-awakening French interest in the Pacific while, conversely, the French visits affected the trends of thought of the Spanish colonists, who were provided with evidence of the weakness of Spain, and brought into contact with a different European culture.

It would be unfair to expect extensive geographical results from expeditions that were primarily devoted to commercial aims, but the sheer number of French ships passing through the Straits

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(1) The Pontchartrain, which sailed from Guayaquil on 21 June 1717 after two years of trading on the coast. Canton was reached in December, but the Pontchartrain did not end her leisurely voyage until August 1719.

(2) The actual number may be larger, as some of the captains may have succeeded in confusing the records to avoid prosecution. Details on many of the voyages are extremely scanty.

of Magellan or rounding the Horn inevitably deepened European knowledge of these seaways. Beauchesne, as we have seen, devoted some time to a careful examination of the Straits; Joseph Darquistade in the St. François discovered the bay that bears the name of his ship near Cape Horn; Marcand on the Ste Barbe had already discovered Ste Barbe Pass near Clarence Island on the Pacific side of Tierra del Fuego; Clipperton Island, now a lonely French outpost in the Pacific, had been reached in 1711 by Martin de Chassiron and du Bocage on their way to China, and named by them 'l'Ile de la Passion'; while Frondat, by crossing to the Californian coast at a higher latitude than was customary, had added tiny St. Antoine and St. Roch islands to the map of the Pacific.

Finally, the Falkland Islands were brought into French notice as a valuable port of call and a possible South Atlantic naval base, while, inevitably, the western seaboards of South America were charted with great care. It was the former, however, which attracted the French, and which were to give rise to the great period of French exploration of the Pacific that began with Bougainville.

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II

France in the Mid-Eighteenth Century

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The real eighteenth century did not begin for France until after the death of Louis XV in 1715. When the long reign of the Sun-King ended, a gradual change came over the kingdom, opening the door to the enlightened and sceptical age that was to undermine the very foundations of the monarchy, and to bring it crashing to destruction within three quarters of a century.

The problems were basically of an economic nature. The war of the Spanish Succession, Louis XIV's final diplomatic gamble, had placed his grandson on the throne of Spain, but the cost of this achievement had been enormous. The country was burdened with debt, and the careful edifice of prosperity erected by Colbert was everywhere in ruins. Since the new king, Louis XV, was a child only five years of age, the government of France fell into the hands of the Duke of Orleans, a man of no mean ability, but one whose rakish way of life left little time for the study of financial reforms. Faced with the problem of restoring the finances of a kingdom plagued by chronic deficits, an antiquated tax-gathering system, and a social structure that perennially nullified the efforts of would-be reformers, the Regent called on the Scottish financier, John Law.

Law had been endeavouring to persuade the French to establish a national bank. In itself, the scheme had much to commend it, but in his enthusiasm Law soon overreached himself. Hoping to repay the national debt by an issue of credit backed by the profits of state commercial enterprises, he obtained control over all the old trading companies, so that his commercial empire soon spread from the Pacific to the wilds of Louisiana. It was unlikely that his schemes would bring in early high returns - as we have seen, his Pacific trade gamble was unsuccessful, owing to Spanish opposition - but the investors believed they would. Law failed to disabuse them, the shares reached absurd heights, and the inevitable crash followed.

The result was a partial shifting of the national debt, and the fostering of interest in France's overseas trade: the Louisiana settlement prospered, and out of the commercial activities of the French India Comapny grew the Indian empire of Dupleix, which only the narrow-minded jealousy of his colleagues, and the military genius of Clive, succeeded in destroying. But a serious consequence of Law's bankruptcy was the undermining of confidence, and the defeat of any hopes the Regent may have entertained of reforming the fiscal system. He was neither energetic not strong enough to attempt any more in this direction. In 1723, he died.

After a short interregnum, during which the unworthy Duke of Bourbon held power, government fell into the hands of

Cardinal Fleury, the king's tutor and a man in his seventies. He was to remain in power for seventeen years. During that time, the finances recovered and prosperity returned, so that in 1738-39 the financial year ended with a substantial surplus, instead of the customary deficit. The War of the Austrian Succession, however, resulted in further setbacks, in spite of some spectacular victories in Flanders. Fleury meanwhile had died, in 1743, and Louis XV had decided to rule alone. But in practice, the personal rule of the monarch was for 20 years to amount to the personal rule of his mistress, the Marquise de Pompadour. Though she proved herself no worse than many of the incompetent ministers which kings of France had been plagued with, she was hardly interested in economies. In fact, she proved remarkably expensive, accumulating an enormous collection of 'objets d'arts' which after her death took eight months to auction, and cost Louis XV an estimated 36 million livres. She was, however, intensely interested in politics, and enjoyed the political power which derived from her position at court. She controlled most appointments, and made full use of the influence which this brought her.

In the highly fashionable literary society over which she reigned, one could not expect much interest or understanding of Colonial problems. The centre of the world, the only part which seemed to matter, even to exist, was Europe. The pre-occupation of the French with continental matters caused them to overlook the widening world overseas. Thus, when the

Seven Years War started in 1756, France at once intervened in Europe and, while her armies struggled vainly in Germany, her colonial empire was snatched away by England.

Canada and India were lost in that tragic struggle which illustrated to Europe the growing impotence of French diplomacy. They mattered little to the Encyclopédistes, who had devoted only 12 lines to Canada, 'a country inhabited by bears, beavers and barbarians, and covered eight months of the year with snow;' or to Voltaire, who had said that 'France could be happy without Quebec;' or to Rousseau, who opposed all colonial ventures as harmful to the perfect societies in which he imagined all natives to be living. But to most Frenchmen, and especially to those who had fought outside Europe, the Seven Years' War was a clear warning that Britain was rapidly outstripping France. After 1763 there were few Frenchmen who believed that a final struggle with Britain could be avoided; many, like Bougainville, sought careers where they felt they could contribute something towards the eventual day of reckoning: the idea of the Revanche is nothing new in French thought. There were fifteen years of troubled peace before France was once again fighting Britain, this time by the side of the American colonists - and this was only a prelude to the twenty years' conflict of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.

The history of exploration in the eighteenth century must therefore be written against a background of continual wars - for the peaceful years of that century total no more than fifty. So troubled were the times that a captain sailing

from port could never be sure that war would not break out while he was at sea, nor consequently of the kind of reception he might expect from other ships that he met on the way.

The social framework had acquired a rigidity which militated against all possibilities of reform. The internal history of France at the time is the story of an unavailing struggle for reform against entrenched privileges. The bastion of reaction was not, as might be expected, the King, but the courtiers and the 'Parlements'. The battle pivoted on the question of fiscal immunity, a subject on which everyone was intransigeant. Although fortune favoured now one side, now the other, the victory was never won; the entire century passed away in an atmosphere of deficits, temporary expedients and threatening bankruptcy, until it ended in inevitable disaster.

What is so remarkable is that, in spite of governmental muddling, the French merchant classes managed to do so well for themselves. Lacking the fiscal privileges available to the highly-born, they succeeded in concealing their profits and avoiding taxation with a virtuosity that, with their fortunes, they have transmitted to their descendants. Had it been left to them, they would have created a great commercial empire, for men like Dupleix, Poivre and Law did not lack vision. Too often, in fact, the main reason for the lack of success of some of the commercial schemes was the enthusiasm of the founders which blinded them to reality. Over-optimism is the particular occupational disease of company promoters, but

when a royal family blessed with absolute power throws its resources and prestige in with them, then their day-dreams are, perhaps, excusable.

In the company which was formed in 1664, the scope, typical of them all, embraces half the world.

'The said Company is empowered to sail and to trade alone, to the exclusion of all our other subjects, from the Cape of Good Hope up to the Indies and the Eastern Seas, even as far as the Straits of Magellan and Le Maire's Straits, in all the South Seas, for a period of fifty consecutive years starting from the day when the first ships shall leave the kingdom, during which time it is expressly forbidden to all persons to engage in such navigation and trade ...' (1)

Colbert's enthusiasm had persuaded the King, the Queen Mother and the Dauphin to invest 60,000 livres each, while the Duc de Mazarin contributed 100,000; but, in spite of this royal support and of the monopoly granted by its charter, the company failed. Some companies, especially the smaller ones, like Régimont's company of 1635, did prosper, (2) but, success was hard to come by and short-lived, and a number of Companies rose, fell and overlapped in intricate patterns. There were, for instance, no fewer than seven successive 'Compagnies des Indes Orientales'.

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(1) Francois Charpentier, Relation de l'Establissement de la Compagnie Française pour le Commerce des Indes Orientales, Article XXVII

(2) See P. Bonnassieux, Les Grandes Compagnies de Commerce, p. 258.

Colonial undertakings, furthermore, were unpopular with French manufacturers as well as with the philosophers, although for different reasons. The King became confused by the protests of the former, who objected vociferously to the importation of goods that were threatening to undercut the local product. There was also a great deal of confusion over the purpose and potentiality of joint stock undertakings; it was difficult to raise enough capital for what was essentially long term ventures; shares were regarded as objects of speculation rather than what their name implies. Directors, anxious to preserve the value of the shares, often abused their powers, and tided over the initial periods when ships had not yet returned by paying dividends out of the already insufficient capital. Wars brought more trouble, as the enemy captured the merchantmen, while French privateers, bringing home their richly-laden prizes, often halted the rise in prices on the home market by auctioning large quantities of foreign goods. The local colonists and traders in India and in Mauritius openly engaged in lucrative contraband. The local agents were often at loggerheads with their Paris Head Office.(1) It is little wonder that the trading companies foundered after a few years, or sub-contracted their privileges in an attempt to put off the day of final reckoning.

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(1) See J.Chailly — Bert, Les Compagnies de Colonisation sous l'Ancien Régime, p.151-5.

Had the great companies prospered, had the French realised the value of colonial possessions, France might have fought with greater determination to defend her nascent empire from the British, and would have sought earlier new fields lying unclaimed, such as Australia and New Zealand, and the larger islands of the Pacific - a policy which would, in itself, have presented a number of different problems. But the Explorers were seeking articles of local manufacture for immediate trade, rather than raw materials, or places for settlement. So that, when official eyes were at last turned towards these territories, it was already too late, and only the crumbs remained.

Unfortunately for France, she lacked satisfactory bases from which to launch expeditions into the Pacific. The eastern entrance, through the Straits of Magellan, or around Cape Horn, was defended by tempestuous seas and - more important - by the Spanish policy of exclusiveness. All ports of call in South America were controlled by the Spaniards, or by the Portuguese, who were seldom well disposed towards French captains. Even when the prior authorisation of the King of Spain had been obtained, a captain could not be certain that the local Spanish viceroy, whose power was practically absolute, would respect it and help a French ship in distress.

France had no base in the Far East, her last outpost being the ill-defended settlements in India. The normal route for Pacific-bound expeditions was, therefore, to the Cape of Good Hope, thence to Mauritius, which, under the more romantic name (1) of 'Ile de France,' played a key part in France's strategy in the Indian Ocean. Once Dupleix's dream of a French Indian Empire had collapsed, the French remained only on sufferance on the coast of India. The main ports were Pondicherry and Yanaon, but their importance depended on trade more than on their strategic value. The Indian settlements were largely at the mercy of the British, and they suffered repeated ruin in the struggle between the two nations. Thus Pondicherry changed hands eight times between 1761 and 1816.

Mauritius, with its sister island Bourbon, was another proposition. Mahé de la Bourdonnais, who gave the island its original impetus, had selected Port Louis as the main harbour, because it was difficult to enter against the prevailing winds without the assistance of the inhabitants. It was therefore easy to defend. It straddled the route to India, and was an important centre of French privateering in wartime. Its capture by Britain was an obvious move, but

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(1) For the Ile-de-France was the name of the Paris region, the heart of France, celebrated by poets.

this did not take place until 1810, long after the French corsairs had taken their heavy toll of British shipping, and the larger forces gathered for the invasion testified to the respect in which the British held the 'Gibraltar of the East'(1).

The lack of a suitable springboard held back the French exploration of the Pacific - one might say Anglo-French exploration, for the British were not much better situated and, apart from occasional British forays and the brief period of French trading voyages to the South American coast, only the Spanish, from their colonies, and the Dutch, from their East Indies, had succeeded in penetrating deep into the Southern Ocean. The other drawbacks were technical ones, notably the absence of a satisfactory method of determining longitude.

It was possible to reckon a ship's distance from the equator, it was also possible to establish the direction in which it was travelling, but what remained impossible was to decide with any degree of certainty, until the second half of the eighteenth century, the distance reached either east or west of its point of departure. The problem could be solved, so it was hoped, by the invention of a watch

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(1) A respect which derived from the ravages caused by the French corsairs to a far greater extent than is usually realised. See on this H.C.M. Austen, Sea Fights and Corsairs of the Indian Ocean, Preface, pp. vii et seq.

which would keep accurately the time of the mother country. By comparing local with Paris or London time, it would be possible to estimate the longitude. Unhappily, the pendulum clocks were as useless on a rolling ship as the water clocks of previous centuries.

Time-keeping on board, even for ordinary purposes, had never been satisfactory. The most common method was by a sand-glass which took a half-hour to empty. Eight turns of the glass were thus equivalent to a four-hour watch, and it was the duty of the quartermaster at the helm to upturn the glass whenever it emptied itself. Sailors, being human, often shortened their watch by turning the sandglass while it was still running through. It was a simple matter to correct the errors by checking the log against the sun at midday, but clouds do not always part at the required time. Thus it was that Duguay-Trouin, the St. Maloraider, found in 1703 that his ship's time was eleven hours fast, after a period of eight days during which he had been unable to get a sight.

The British, hoping to find a solution to a problem of growing seriousness in an expanding empire, had offered as early as 1713, a reward of £20,000 for a satisfactory sea-going chronometer. Equally saddled with overseas possessions and important trade interests, the Spanish and the Dutch had made similar offers, but it was not until 1761 that John Harrison came forward to claim the reward for a chronometer with a compensation-curb that allowed for the changes in

temperature encountered on long sea-journeys. The invention was tested with considerable caution - Harrison was not paid until twelve years later and, even then, the Board of Longitude cheated him out of £1250 - but the basic problem had been solved, even though a cheap chronometer, available to ordinary merchantmen, remained to be developed.

In France, rivalvry between horologists went back to the beginning of the eighteenth century when Julien Leroy (1) began to work on the problem of a maritime chronometer. It was, however, his son Pierre who perfected a watch which earned him a prize from the Academy of Sciences. Meanwhile, his rival, Ferdinand Berthoud, a Swiss, (2) had devoted himself to the same problem. When news of Harrison's work became known, Berthoud was sent to London with representatives of the Academy of Sciences to study the Englishman's work. How much of what he learned was new to him remains, to some extent, a matter for conjecture (3), but Berthoud, after revising his first model eight times, was able in 1768 to present a marine chronometer which proved superior to Leroy's and which aroused the enthusiasm of both Fleurieu and the naval astronomer Borda. But until these chronometers became available, in

(1) 1686/1759. The name is sometimes found spelled Leroi and Le Roy, but Leroy is more common.
(2) Born near Neufchâtel in 1727, died 1807. Berthoud settled in Paris at the age of eighteen.
(3) 'More than ten years before Harrison's chronometers were tested, Berthoud and Leroy had deposited in the office of the Academy of Sciences, sealed memoires containing descriptions of their machines.' Nouvelle Biographie Générale, Vol. 5, p. 725.

the 1770's, French navigators were compelled to resort to the rough system of the log and dead reckoning.

The normal practice was to drop a triangular piece of wood - the 'bateau de loch' - overboard. The rope to which it was attached was divided into parts of a mile and then rolled on a wheel; the length unrolled in a given period gave the speed of the vessel; from this, the distance covered since the last reckoning could be estimated, and the new position marked on the chart.(1) Since there were no time pieces aboard apart from the sandglass, it was necessary either to count aloud the seconds, or to use standard sentences which took a known time to repeat.

The unreliability of such a method can readily be imagined, and it would have often been no less accurate ot think of a number and to write that down. It is not surprising that distances believed to have been travelled across the Pacific were frequently hopelessly wrong (2), and that out of the truly enormous margin of error many legendary islands were born.

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(1) See J.P.E. Jurien de la Gravière, Les Marins du XVe et XVIe siècles, vol.I, pp.10-11.

(2) In 1774 Kerguelen, in the Rolland, having lost his astronomer, Mersay, had been working out his position by dead reckoning. The Oiseau, which was accompanying the Rolland, was still able to use astronomical observations. When the two were compared three weeks later an error of 4°33' was found in the dead reckoning, Kerguelen, Journal du Rolland, 20 April 1774.

or shipworms, could attack a wooden vessel and riddle it through in a matter of months, it was necessary to protect the keel with copper sheeting or nails. Copper-bottoming complicated the carrying out of repairs in distant countries where there were no adequate facilities; the captains preferred the 'mailletage', the long and laborious process of covering the timber with nails. This in turn could render the ships heavy and awkward to manoeuvre.

The greatest problem was food. When the capricious winds command, it is impossible to estimate the length of the voyage and, when the expedition was to enter little known regions where the dispositions of the natives were likely to be unfriendly, the task of the providors was not made any easier. The solution was to cram food and water casks in every possible nook and cranny, but, with the ship's spare ropes and sails, the guns, the minimum scientific equipment, the luggage and the cargo taken for trade purposes, or to conciliate the natives, the amount of space left for cheese and vegetables was a frequent subject for dispute. The official estimate of the supplies loaded was inevitably optimistic and, on account of corruption and dishonesty, the quality was frequently poor.

In Gonneville's affidavit, he states that the Espoir had taken on board enough biscuit, grain and flour for two years, together with a quantity of peas, beans, bacon, dried and salted fish, cider and other beverages ' not

including the supply of water for a year and more.' (1) No doubt, in order to gain official sympathy and to move the authorities to some action of protest against the pirate who ruined him, he exaggerates his investment. It is a common weakness among creditors. But in a corrupt age, when indolent officials were often in the pay of dishonest navy contractors, captains found the supplies short and of poor quality, for even if the expedition were fortunate enough to receive all that was applied for, corruption of a different nature pursued them. All their ingenuity could not prevent the water from becoming putrid, the food from decaying, nor the poultry from dying.

Food was a necessity to the men engaged on the heavy manual labour of manoeuvring a sailing ship, but it also played an important part in the routine of a sailor's life. 'Lunch and dinner play a great part in life on board. Sailors are not more greedy than monks, but a well-garnished table is the hobby of those who have no other,' wrote an admiral who had sailed as a boy with Baudin. (2) No one was better placed than he to appreciate the bitterness of the arguments, incomprehensible to landsmen, that raged on that unhappy, but typical, expedition over the quality and the quantity of the food.

The longer the voyage, the worse the food became. Men and women passengers, like the officers and the men, had to accustom themselves to eating food that had practically lost

(1) 'Déclaration,' Article 5, in d'Avezac, 'Campagne du Navire L'Espoir.'

(2) Jurien de la Gravière, Souvenirs d'un Amiral, vol. I pp. 90-1.

its right to that name. Gemelli Careri, an intrepid globe-trotter who travelled across the north Pacific in the late seventeenth century, has left a vivid description of meals at sea on the slow-moving Manila Galleon.' 'The ship swarms with little vermin which the Spanish call gorgojos, bred in the biscuit, so swift that in a short time they not only run over cabin beds and the very dishes the men eat on, but insensibly fasten upon the body. There are several other sorts of vermin of sundry colours that suck the blood. Abundance of flies fall into the dishes of broth into which there also swim worms of several sorts ...The king's allowance [was laid on the table] in every mouthful whereof there went down abundance of maggots and gorgojos chewed and bruised. On fish days the common diet was rank old fish boiled in fair water and salt; at noon we had mongos, like kidney beans, in which there were so many maggots that they swam at the top of the broth, and the quantity was so great that, besides the loathing they caused, I doubted whether the dinner was fish or flesh.'(1)

Jurien de la Gravière's description of bad food at sea over a hundred years later shows how little life on board had improved: 'The biscuit had been invaded by myriads of larvae and of insects. The cakes, riddled through, crumbled into dust as soon as we touched them. These microscopic insects had become horribly troublesome; they flew about everywhere,

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(1) Quoted in W. L. Schurtz, The Manila Galleon, P. 267.

and one could not breathe without the risk of absorbing some through the mouth or the nostrils. To this plague another, no less unpleasant, had been added. The cockroaches had multiplied with such fertility that the corvettes had become infested with them in a very short time; the rats on their side had multiplied with no less success. All these animals caused a nauseating smell inside the ships.' (1) With the enterprising mind of youth, he decided to sleep on deck, using a hen coop as bunk for the following eighteen months.

Until Francois Appert discovered the canning process for the preservation of food, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, part of the solution lay in the loading of live food supplies. All the available deck space was filled with cages and pens, until it became nearly impossible to work the ship. 'The ship is a farmyard,' complained Robert Challes, who travelled to the Far East in 1690, and who was forced to thread his way through a deck space encumbered with bullocks, cows, calves, sheep, pigs, hens, pigeons, ducks and turkey. (2)

This state of affairs was prevalent right into the nineteenth century. Upon arrival at Pondicherry in 1824 the Baron de Bougainville, commanding the Thétis and Espérance expedition, recorded that his first care was 'to

(1) Souvenirs d'un Amiral, vol. I, p.105.
(2) W.H. Lewis, The Splendid Century, p.256.

land the sick and to get rid of our passengers and of all the luggage which cluttered the decks, and was no less harmful to cleanliness than to the well-being of the crew'. (1)

The scientists on board and even the scientifically - inclined officers added to the confusion. 'To clean out the shells, we placed them in a bucket filled with sand, and we left them buried until we considered the decay of the animal sufficiently advanced. I leave to the imagination the smell which all these podridorios gave out.' (2)

Medical care was usually rudimentary and governed by the theory of vapours and humours, which was in favour in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. When Choisy went to Siam on the Oiseau in 1685 with a diplomatic mission, the ship was battened down at sundown to keep out the harmful night air 'which brings on disease.' Robert Challes, on his 1690 voyage to the East, refused the attentions of the ship's surgeon when he fell ill, on the grounds that he had promised his family that he would return to France, and that the surgeon would cause him to break his promise by speeding his departure for the other world. (3)

(1) 'Journal de la Navigation autour du Globe', Vol. I, p. 88.
(2) Jurien de la Gravière, 'Souvenirs d'un Amiral,' vol. I, p. 129n.
(3) W. H. Lewis, The Splendid Century, p. 258.

Disease took a frightful toll of the crews and passengers, scurvy being the most common. Scurvy is brought on by the insufficiency of vitamin C. Although it was realised that a poor diet was an important contributing factor, its prevalence among sailors gave rise to the belief that the sea air was equally harmful, hence the care taken by the captains to provide opportunities for the crews to go on walks ashore on every possible occasion. While such leave certainly had beneficial effects, the sick were often trundled ashore in primitive conditions, and caught in tropical showers that added nothing to their comfort. Furthermore, this practice tended to confuse the true issue, which was diet. In 1685, a French doctor who had travelled to the East Indies wrote an account of his journey which, although not of particular interest, included a treatise on the diseases prevalent in eastern countries and among sailors:

'Private individuals must, if they can, get a supply of lemon juice, verjuice, rosolio, jam and dried fruit, especially prunes....Drink good well-diluted wine and do not go thirsty... change the linen and wash very often the mouth and the body at frequent intervals.' (1)

Had this sound advice been adopted, countless lives lost by scurvy would have been saved. But, nearly a century later, though the final solution was near, the

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(1) Dr.C.Dellon, Relation d'un Voyage aux Indes Orientales, vol.II, pp.10-12.

real cause of the disease remained a mystery, even to experienced captains, who still placed their faith in the land breezes and fresh meat:

'It is really surprising that our crew finds itself in the state it is in. From Bengal they have always kept close to the land...During all this time, and for quite a long time after leaving the Bashi Islands, they have eaten only fresh meat.' (1)

The ships' surgeons resorted to various palliatives, occasional bleedings and purgatives, with what variations in diet the remaining resources of the ship and local herbs obtained from the natives enabled them to concoct. There was no improvement until 1795, when a regular administration of lime juice throughout the British Navy eventually banished scurvy from the service. But this took time, and scurvy caused frightful losses during the Napoleonic wars (2), and in the merchant service over 70 years went by before this dreadful scourge was eliminated.

Taillefer, who was a surgeon on Baudin's expedition of 1800 to 1804, and a conscientious and sensitive man, was strongly affected by the men's sufferings, which he found himself unable to alleviate. 'Bereft of the most effective remedies, confined in a narrow ship, the plaything of the winds and of the sea, far from any place suitable for us to put into, the sick were multiplying every day. Swellings covered by black scabs appeared on various parts of their bodies, the skin revealed small wine-coloured stains at the

(1) De Surville, Journal du St. Jean Baptiste, 23 November 1769.
(2) C. Northcote Parkinson, War in the Eastern Seas, p. 303.

root of the hairs; their joints stiffened, their flexor muscles seemed to shorten and held their limbs half-bent. But nothing was more hideous than the appearance of their face: to the leaden complexion of the victims of scurvy was added the prominence of the gums jutting out of the mouth, which itself showed ulcerated spots. The sick gave out a fetid smell, which, when you breathed it in, seemed to attack the very root of life. I have often felt all my strength ebb away when I approached them. Their state of weakness did not prevent them from retaining the use of all their intellectual faculties, which made them feel all the more cruelly the pangs of despair.' (1)

Even when a crew sought a final refuge in some port, it was likely to meet other diseases, before which eighteenth century doctors were practically powerless - bubonic plague, cholera, typhoid and above all, dysentery. The latter was particularly dangerous in the Dutch East Indies, and it took a frightful toll of the weakened and ill-fed French crews, which had looked on Batavia and Surabaya as havens of refuge for the desperate.

It is not to be wondered at that, in spite of the attractions which long voyages of exploration had for the adventurously inclined it was not easy to recruit sailors for the Pacific-bound ships. Bribery, guile and force were resorted to; the real destination was frequently concealed from the sailors

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(1) Quoted in Bouvier and Maynial, ~~pp.165-6,~~ Une Aventure dans les mers Australes, pp.165-6.

who were, anyhow, for the greater part, illiterate poor to whom the far-away islands meant nothing. Many came from provinces which had strong traditions of the sea - Brittany, Normandy, the South Coast. Others were driven by sheer poverty into the wooden ships, where at least there was some guarantee of food, and employment for many months ahead, with, at times, the possibility of prize money or bonuses. A number were criminals, whom the sea enabled to escape from their pursuers.

Inevitably, the quality of the crews varied. Desertions were a constant worry. Clashes with the natives quickly alienated the islanders, and destroyed the fragile goodwill that the commanders were striving to preserve.

The French government had tried to create a reserve of men from which better recruits for official expeditions could be selected, but this scheme was not successful. Under an Ordonnance of 1689, all men employed on ships, ferries, and boats, including boys of eighteen who had served three years at sea, were required to register. They remained on the lists until they reached the age of fifty, so that in theory at least neither the royal navy, nor explorers setting out under the king's instructions, should have had any real difficulty in selecting from the lists the most suitable men, but as usual the local officials were incapable or unwilling to enforce the law. Local ties of friendship frequently

nullified the efforts of the Paris government, so that when a call-up came there might be so many exemptions and evasions that insufficient skilled men came forward. (1)

The officers had their own troubles. The royal navy selected entrants on a strict class basis. Officers who were not of noble birth - called 'officiers bleus' on account of the colour of their uniforms - had few opportunities. Having to bear the insolence of the true aristocrats - the 'reds' - they preferred the merchant service, where they could at least achieve their own command. In wartime they were accorded temporary commissions in the royal navy, which were limited to the duration of the campaign or of the war, but in peacetime there were fewer vacancies, and the royal navy obtained the services only of the unemployed merchant officers whom we may suppose to have been the less efficient, since most of the others refused to submit to the taunts of the privileged 'reds'.

The system led to constant friction, and was a source of much bitterness, yet it was not abolished until France was on the brink of the Revolution. (2)

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(1) O. Wright, New Zealand 1826/1827, Appendix, p. 242; Cte. de Lapeyrouse-Bonfils, Histoire de la Marine Française, Vol. II, pp. 164-7.

(2) Lapeyrouse-Bonfils, op. cit., pp. 151.

At the apex, the commander himself was plagued by different problems. The success of the expedition, its very survival, were in his hands and, although he had to contend with the jealousy of his rivals in the naval service, he normally had the trust of his superiors, who allowed him to divert from the course laid down in the official instructions when circumstances required it - a privilege of which all the eighteenth century explorers availed themselves to a remarkable degree.

Another problem was the presence on board of scientific specialists totally ignorant of naval matters, frustrated in their own work by illness and bad weather, resentful of the captain's overriding authority and at times unsympathetic attitude. There were clashes during the voyages of Kerguelen, d'Entrecasteaux and Baudin. The practice of sending scientists on expeditions failed so lamentably during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras that it was abandoned for many years in favour of the policy of appointing naval officers with special interests and aptitudes, but whose outlook made sure that they concerned themselves primarily with navigation.

Nor could the commander be certain of his reception at a foreign port of call. The frequent wars which divided Europe at this time cut across the scientific work of the expeditions, and ships which were away for long periods were completely out of touch with developing events. It was often possible to obtain free passports from the principal nations, to protect navigators whose work would benefit mankind in general - there was indeed a remarkable amount of co-operation on this matter

between the main protagonists, Britain and France - but not all commanders were able to benefit from such arrangements, especially when the expedition was of a semi-official nature. The problem was further complicated by the presence of the high seas of private raiders, who were more than willing to turn their blind eye to the passport, if there was a chance of immediate booty.

Suspicion towards the stranger on the high seas led to dissimulation, and to the practice of flying different flags to conceal one's nationality until the last moment. (1) Towards the end of the century, the French Revolution added to the captain's troubles by undermining the organisation of the navy. Discipline - so necessary in a ship bound for distant lands - was loosened, and class distinction set the officers themselves at loggerheads. The d'Entrecasteaux expedition broke up entirely as a result of this, and it lay at the root of much of the trouble that beset Baudin's.

The Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars thus brought to an end the main part - one might be tempted to say the heroic part - of the exploration of the Pacific. When the curtain rose again on French Pacific voyages after the long wars, the scene had been transformed: little remained to be discovered, and a burgeoning desire for actual colonisation was preparing the way for a political struggle.

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(1) e.g. Kerguelen, meeting a ship in 1774, first flew an English flag, then a French one. The unknown vessel first hoisted Dutch colours, then hauled them down before sailing rapidly away, leaving Kerguelen to speculate as to her real nationality. Journal du Rolland, 24 August 1774.

III

The Savants.

The Eighteenth century has been called the Age of Enlightenment, and in no country was there greater intellectual activity than in France. Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes, which had appeared in 1721, had been an instant success; his Esprit des Lois, twenty-seven years later, was an even greater one, for it ran into twenty impressions in as many months, and was translated into every European language. Voltaire, whose literary career overlaps Montesquieu's to some extent, straddles the mid-eighteenth century like a sardonic and often angry colossus. Diderot, especially, heading the groups of Encyclopédistes, symbolises an age that was becoming passionately interested in knowledge and in social philosophy.

Knowledge systematically presented appealed to the age. Ephraim Chambers had published his Cyclopaedia in 1728, the great Grosses Vollstandiges Universal Lexicon of Johann Zedler had begun to appear in 1732, and Gianfrancesco Pivati had published his Dizionario Universale in 1744 and his Nuovo Dizionario in 1746. The French came slightly later on the scene: they had asked Chambers in 1739 to prepare a French edition, but he died in the following year. Even so, the Encyclopédie was derived from Chambers' work, which had been

translated into French by John Mills and Gottfried Sellius. Diderot, who had been called in to repair the confusion resulting from Mill's errors and his printers' dishonesty, was assisted by the most eminent minds of France: d'Alembert, the mathematician, Voltaire himself, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Marmontel, Quesnay and Turgot. Quesnay, a medical man, became prominent as the leader of the Economistes, or Physiocrates, who were seeking an economic formula that would solve France's problems and form the basis of a general economic philosophy. Finally, a little apart from the rest, stood the august figure of Buffon, the great naturalist, endeavouring to complete his own monumental work - the Histoire Naturelle.

All these formed a loose association that has been termed "Les Philosophes," which met in the drawing-rooms of the great and famous hostesses of the day - Madame Geoffrin, Madame du Deffand, Madame de Tencin - and which enjoyed the protection of the Marquise de Pompadour and, therefore, indirectly, that of the king; some, like Diderot and d'Alembert, received the patronage of Catherine II and Frederick the Great. Their influence spread, on a lesser scale, to the provinces, where there were local learned societies and corresponding members of parent bodies. Thus it came about that in Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, the first methodical and scholarly French study of the Pacific was written.

Dijon in the eighteenth century was a prosperous and important provincial city; not only was it a leading provincial literary centre, (1) containing its own academy of science and letters, but its literary 'salons' enjoyed a high reputation, second only to that of their Paris counterparts. Among its most prominent members, Dijon's literary society counted Charles de Brosses, (1709-1777), the president of the Burgundian parliament, and a man whose enthusiasm for learning was, in many ways, typical of his day. In 1750, he published his Lettres sur l'état actuel de la ville Souterraine d'Herculée; in 1765, a study on the origin of language; and in the last year of his life appeared his Histoire du septième siècle de la république romaine; in addition, he had been working over a period of many years on a translation of Sallust. Such a catholicity of tastes and interests encompassed yet another work - a systematic history of the exploration of the Pacific.

Charles de Brosses' father had long been interested in geographical questions, and he had in his Dijon home a number of valuable works of reference. De Brosses himself and his father-in-law were shareholders in the French India Company. (2) Often these investments were grudgingly made as a matter of duty by people who, like the de Brosses, were in official positions - but they no doubt helped to awake in any shareholder who was endowed with an enquiring mind an interest in distant and little known regions. This interest crystallised in May 1752 when a 'Lettre' by Pierre

(1) A. C. Taylor, Le Président de Brosses et l'Australie, p. 12.
(2) Ibid., p. 50.

de Maupertuis, the mathematician and astronomer, was read at a meeting of the Dijon society to which de Brosses belonged. This letter, sur les Progrès des Sciences, was addressed to the Prussian king, Frederick the Great, and it drew that monarch's attention to the unexplored parts of the southern hemisphere.

Maupertuis' letter, soon to be ridiculed by Voltaire, with whom he quarrelled, and soon, in consequence, to become unjustly neglected, led de Brosses to speculate on the South Sea, and to compose in time a mémoire, enlarging on Maupertuis' suggestion, and making use of the accounts of the voyages of Roggeween and Dampier. (1) Buffon, a patron of the Dijon society, who had already speculated in his Histoire Naturelle on the possible existence of new species on the undiscovered lands in the Pacific, suggested to de Brosses that the scope of the mémoire should be widened, as this would help to stimulate interest in possible discoveries in the South Sea, and would be an important work at a time when 'a neighbouring power is visibly assuming a universal command of the sea.' (2) Anson's voyage had given proof of the practicability of Pacific navigation, if properly planned and organised; it was now desirable that the problem be submitted to a careful and scholarly examination.

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(1) Ch. de Brosses, Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes, vol. I, pp. I-II.

(2) Ibid., vol. I, p. IV.

For this, it would be necessary not only to detail the work to be done and the advantages to be gained, but also to review the work of exploration which had already been done. A collection of extracts from previous accounts of voyagers was the kind of systematic work that would appeal to the age of the encyclopedia. Collections of voyages had appeared before - such as Théodore de Bry's in 1613 and Melchisedech Thévenot's in 1663, and, more recently, John Harris's in 1703 and John Green's in 1746, but none dealt exclusively with the Pacific. While de Brosses was planning his work, the Abbe Prévost (of Manon Lescaut fame) was publishing his translation of John Green's A General Collection of Voyages and Travels, under the title of Histoire Générale des Voyages; the eleventh volume, covering, as it happened, part of the Pacific field, appeared in 1753: de Brosses was unimpressed by it, (1) and realised that he would have to obtain copies of the original journals, and get them translated himself. He may have found of greater value John Campbell's edition of Harris's Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels, published in 1744, which included comments and an introduction that foreshadowed some of the Frenchman's work. (2)

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(1) Ibid., Vol. I, P. IV.
(2) A. C. Taylor, Le Président de Brosses et l'Australie, pp. 34-7

De Brosses' Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes, which was ready for publication in 1756, suffered from the fact that it had grown out of his original mémoire. Whereas it might have been expected that a lengthy introduction would deal with the problem of the Pacific, and with the openings that offered to an enterprising nation, or, alternatively, that these various considerations would develop naturally from a historical survey of what had already been achieved by navigators, and thus make up the second volume, the actual voyages are, in fact, encased between an essay of considerable extent on the advantages to be gained from discoveries, and an actual plan for a voyage and a settlement. Between these fore and aft sections are the three which make up the history proper, arranged chronologically - one for the sixteenth century, one for the seventeenth, and the third for the eighteenth. Although, in theory, such an arrangement is not without a logical balance, the result is not as tidy as one could expect; but the work has the quality of uniqueness, since no thorough survey of Pacific knowledge in either English or French had ever been written; and in addition, although deBrosses was a pioneer in a new field and might have been excused a certain carelessness, he had in fact taken a great deal of care in compiling so accurate and reliable a collection.

De Brosses' various theories are representative of contemporary thought. He believed quite firmly in the equilibrium theory, which required the presence of a land mass in the southern hemisphere to keep the globe on an even keel, (his influence on Dalrymple's later work is obvious.),

but he did admit that this counterweight could take the form of a number of islands instead of a single continent. He echoed Buffon's hope that, once the isolation of the southern lands had been dispersed, exploration would bring to knowledge new plants and new animals, to the eventual benefit of trade.

Indeed, the stress throughout is on commerce, and not on conquest. Colonies and establishments abroad can be a source of wealth and a source of strength. For one thing, they require a large fleet to maintain trade and contracts, and 'he who is master of the sea is master of the land.' (1) The value of faraway islands as penal settlements is also underlined, the question of the overseas deportation of criminals and 'guilty women' having occupied European legal minds since the discovery of the New World. De Brosses is more reasonable than most and also more human; far from visualising such horrors as Devil's Island, he hopes for mixed settlements, where the less fortunate can obtain a second chance to rebuild their life - his was a French call for what the British were eventually to develop in New South Wales.

He was also a firm believer in Gonneville Land; indeed there was no reason for him to doubt the tradition. Although Lozier-Bouvet had attempted without success seventeen years earlier to follow the old captain's supposed route, de Brosses

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(1) Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 60-2.

still remained hopeful. Bouvet had been stopped by ice, and contemporary opinion considered this a clear indication that land was near - for de Brosses, like Bougainville and most others, did not believe that sea water could freeze, and held that ice, therefore, must come from rivers and so be proof of the existence of land. Indeed, as he said, 'the more land there is the more ice will form: therefore the more ice is found, the more land there is.' (1) However, although de Brosses believed that Bouvet had come upon some kind of land, he doubted whether this was Gonneville Land which he placed 'south of the South Moluccas, in the part which I have named Australasia.' (2)

It was indeed he who coined the term Australasia, as well as the word Polynesia from, as he explains, two Greek words meaning 'multiplicity of islands.' (3) Magellanica, a term intended to apply to the south-eastern Pacific, did not survive, however, for the simple reason that the area is practically empty. In his choice of a suitable island for a settlement of French colonists, and ~~for~~ as headquarters for further exploration, he was less fortunate; he picked on New Britain, which had been praised by Roggeween and Dampier, (4)

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(1) Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 60-2.
(2) Ibid., Vol. I, p. 104,
(3) Ibid., Vol. I, p. 80,
(4) Ibid., Vol. II, p. 385.

two of the three navigators on whose voyages he had based himself when composing his original mémoire. It was, therefore from the East - Pondicherry or the Ile de France - that he considered an expedition should set out; three ships should sail, either north or south of Java to New Britain, thence south to carry out further explorations in Australasia. (1) As it turned out, the French explorer who came under the direct influence of de Brosses - Bougainville - entered the Pacific by the Straits of Magellan; it was de Surville who sailed from Pondicherry, and Marion du Fresne who sailed from the Ile de France; and all three chose their respective routes, not because of any geographical considerations, but because of their own circumstances. Nevertheless, the Indian Ocean route was a logical one for the exploration of 'Australasia', especially for anyone who needed to make use of the westerly winds, and James Cook, for instance, used it for his last two voyages.

It is not possible to estimate with any accuracy de Brosses's influence on Pacific exploration. As A.C. Taylor wrote, 'The History finds its place in a chain of facts, of theories and of voyages, each of which had an effect on the next, without it being possible to measure exactly the degree of its influence. It is certain that President de Brosses' book formed an important link in this chain, and his contemporaries...did not overlook it. One could not deny his direct influence on Bougainville

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(1) Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 387 et seq.

and Dalrymple; by the intermediary of the latter, he succeeded in providing and guiding, to some extent, the impulse that resulted in the English discoveries?' (1)

The value of his work received prompt recognition. Even Voltaire, who quarrelled with the President, as he did with so many others, and ~~who~~ had little sympathy to spare for overseas settlements, did not attack him with the vehemence that he had displayed against Maupertuis and his 'lettre'. The Sage of Ferney contented himself with nick-naming de Brosses 'le Président des Terres Australes': de Brosses' work was no superficial study, and the impish pamphleteer paid him the homage of recognising it.

A scholarly German translation by Johann Adelung soon appeared, with which the President had cause to be satisfied, but the British paid him a different tribute-they plagiarised him; one might even say, more correctly, that they pirated his work.

John Callander, whose Terra Australis Cognita appeared in Edinburgh in 1768, does not mention de Brosses anywhere by name, although he does acknowledge his debt to a French writer. The work, with large passages of literal translations from the French book, is adapted so as to present a case for English, as against French, exploration of the Pacific. Thus the normal translation of 'Français' is 'English.' Parts that were less likely to attract the British reader, or less relevant to the British case, are condensed or removed. Bouvet's

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(1) Le Président de Brosses et l'Australie, p. 171.

journey loses importance since Gonneville's Land was not of great importance to British explorers.

But Alexander Dalrymple was a more honourable man. He had spent many years in the East, in the service of the East India Company, and an interest in Pacific exploration had been awakened in him by this and by his later studies. He first contacted de Brosses in 1765, and their friendship remained unaltered until the President's death, (1) Two years later, Dalrymple published his Account of the Discoveries made in the South Pacifick Ocean previous to 1764, a work which brought the story of Pacific exploration a little further up to date, but which owed a clear and acknowledged debt to the President's work. To the extent that Dalrymple's book and personal advocacy influended the Royal Society's decision to press for exploration in the south Pacific, to that extent, as Taylor pointed out, did de Brosses help to bring about the successful results of the British voyages.

There is, however, little direct influence that de Brosses can really lay claim to, with the sole exception of his effect on Bougainville: he was consulted with regard to the latter's Falklands settlement and to his circumnavigation. The President's theories attracted Bougainville, and in a brief mémoire drawn up, probably in 1765, he made use of an argument which de Brosses had stressed in his book.

'The ice, which is considered as a barrier preventing navigation towards the poles and the discovery of the

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(1) A C.Taylor, ibid., pp.156-7.

southern land, is merely proof that there are very large rivers in the neighbourhood of the latitudes where it has been encountered. In consequence, it also tells us that there are vast continents where these rivers have their source, and one should not be discouraged at the sight of such obstacles.' (1)

It was in de Brosses's theories that Bougainville found the inspiration that his restless mind was seeking. (2) He willingly acknowledged his debt and, although the older man's counsels were, of necessity, not always followed, de Brosses could rejoice at the thought of the success of his main task - that of focusing French attention on the Pacific. 'Reading the first edition of this Histoire des Navigations Australes turned him, as he himself told the author, towards this kind of discovery,' he commented of Bougainville. (3) And as disciples go, the humane and enlightened de Brosses was indeed fortunate.

He was in fact the armchair geographer, the savant who studied and collated the works of travellers, without himself ever venturing abroad. There were others in the eighteenth

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(1) Découverte des Terres Australes, MS in Mitchell Library, Sydney.
(2) A. C. Taylor, Le Président de Brosses et l'Australie, p. 148.
(3) Handwritten comment in the Bibliothèque Nationale, quoted in A. C. Taylor's 'Le Président de Brosses et l'Australie' p. 143.

century who were working on geographical problems, who were perfecting the science of astronomy, and some of these were given the opportunity to travel. The period of French trade along the Pacific seaboard of South America had enabled two such savants - Feuillet(1) and Frézier - to pay visits to areas which had been previously closed to French scientists.

Louis Feuillet was born in 1660 and, having shown an early aptitude for mathematics and astronomy, he became a protégé of the Cassinis, a family of astronomers under whose charge the Paris observatory was to remain until the Revolution. He accompanied Jacques Cassini on a voyage to the Levant, and was later sent to the Caribbean, the aim of both voyages being astronomical observations and the determination of longitudes; the excellent work which he had carried out on these two missions earned him the title of Royal Mathematician, and resulted in his being despatched to the South Sea at the end of 1707.

Feuillet received an appointment in the St. Jean Baptiste (2) as Royal Mathematician and Botanist, and he was instructed to carry out a scientific survey of the Pacific coast, endeavouring, as far as he was able, to fix the exact longitudes of the principal ports. The voyage began badly, the ship having to put in for repairs at Malta, and not reaching Gibraltar until

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(1) A more frequent spelling is Feuillée, but the relevant article in Nouvelle Biographie Générale lists him as 'Louis Feuillet et non Feuillée', vol.17, p.603.

(2) Captain Doublet, who returned in 1711. It was a ship of 500 tons, with 202 men and 44 guns. See Dahlgren, Relations Commerciales et Maritimes, pp.553-6.

five months after her departure from Marseilles. Feuillet travelled with Doublet to Valparaiso, went on to Callao in a Spanish ship, then to Lima, where he remained for nine months teaching astronomy. He returned to France in the Phélipeaux, and shortly afterwards published the results of his work.

His book, entitled Journal des Observations Physiques, Mathématiques et Botaniques faites par l'ordre du Roy sur les Côtes Orientales de l'Amérique Méridionale et dans les Indes Occidentales depuis l'année 1707 jusques en 1712, (1) is as full of important scientific observations as the title promises, providing the most exact reckonings of longitude which had been made until then. With typical modesty, the author makes little mention of himself or of his own travels. Captain Doublet also had his claim to fame. He favoured the colonisation of the deserted Falkland Islands by French settlers and, to this end, wrote a Relation de la Nouvelle Découverte des Iles Cébaldes et à quoy elles pourraient être utiles, which was truly instrumental in directing French attention to these islands - an interest that materialised into actual occupation fifty years later.

While Feuillet was preparing to return to France, another savant was setting sail for the Pacific coast, but this time the aim of the voyage had political undertones, for Amédée-François Frézier (2) was an army man who had specialised in

(1) Three volumes, Paris, 1714.
(2) He was descended from an English Roman Catholic family, the Frazers, which had emigrated to France during the anti-papist troubles of the sixteenth century.

defence works. Born in 1682 in Savoy, he had shown an early capacity for foreign languages and for scientific studies. While still a student, he wrote a brief treatise on navigation and astronomy, having been inspired by one of his teachers, the geographer and mathematician Philippe de Lahire. At the age of twenty, he joined an infantry regiment, but five years later he transferred to the engineers, having earned fame in the previous year through the publication of a treatise on fireworks which became very rapidly a standard textbook. He was despatched to St. Malo where the fortifications and the harbour were being improved, and was shortly afterwards despatched on a mission to the South Seas. He stated in the preface of the book in which he gave account of his journeyings (1) that Louis XIV had sent him on a merchantman to chart the coast while the French could still enter the Pacific, and before the expected ban on such voyages became operative. Thus, if war should break out between France and Spain, the French would have a sound knowledge of the coast for possible military operations against the poorly defended Spanish Pacific: the ghost of Machiavelli lurked in the corridors of Versailles. However, if his voyage did have as its mainspring diplomatic and military considerations, Frézier widened the scope of his instructions, and brought back information of considerable geographical and scientific value.

(1) A Voyage to the South Sea and along the Coast of Chili and Peru in the years 1712, 1713 and 1714, (Paris, 1716), English edition 1717, with a preface by Edmund Halley.

He sailed at the end of 1711 in the St. Joseph, commanded by Battas du Chesne, with the Marie as store-ship. Frézier had little knowledge of seamanship, but to disguise the true purpose of his mission he served as an officer. By mid-May the two ships reached the Horn, where they became separated; and a month later the St. Joseph entered Concepcion, where two other French ships were at anchor; The arrival of a fourth trader threatened to depress the market overmuch, and the St. Joseph went on to Valparaiso. Even there, competition was severe:

'The little likelihood that there was that the Sieur Duchesne should sell his Goods at the Price he demanded, and the Resolution he had taken till Peace was proclaimed, designing to stay the last on the Coast, flattering himself that no more Ships would come from France, prevailed on me to take such Measures as might be agreeable to His Majesty's Orders, who limited me the Leave he had been pleased to grant me for performing this Voyage to two Years.' (1)

In Callao, as in the other ports he visited, he made careful notes of the defences, mapping the forts, counting the cannons, the number of troops and, so far as he could ascertain it, estimating the loyalty of the colonists and of the Indians. Concepcion he had found to be badly fortified with only a militia of two thousand men; their pay had been in arrears for 14 years, so that the troops had been forced to disperse to seek employment. The city itself had only a battery of nine guns, nearly a century old, and the

(1) Ibid., p. 137.

surrounding district was in no better conditions. (1)

Noting wryly that the 'Spanish officials will not transgress the laws of the kingdom for nothing, where they have the power in their own hands,' he foresaw the end of the French trade, now that the end of the war was in sight, but it was a trade that anyhow had been ruined by competition: 'The French resorting thither without Measure have carried many more Goods than the Country could use, that Plenty had obliged them to sell the said Goods at very low rates....Three Ships with each of them Goods to the value of a Million Pieces of Eight would have been sufficient for Peru yearly.' (2)

The traders were hardly likely to co-operate in saving a market the political basis of which was so fragile. Only John Law might have had sufficient vision and power to regulate the trade and, perhaps, obtain through goodwill a concession from the Spanish - but Law's opportunity had not yet arrived, and when his hour struck it was too late. When Frézier returned to Concepcion after an absence of fourteen months, news of the peace was on its way, and the attitude of the Spanish officials was changing rapidly. 'The President set forth an Order for all the French to depart the Kingdom and be obliged to embark within two days, with a Prohibition to allow them Provisions or Lodgings in the Town or hire them

(1) Ibid., pp. 53-4. Frézier's frank and detailed report, printed abroad as well as in France, cannot have endeared the French to the Spanish authorities, whose unpreparedness in South America stood thus blatantly revealed.
(2) Ibid., p. 201.

Horses under the Penalty of 500 Pieces of Eight ...Nevertheless, after this Publication, there arrived in December and January seven French Ships, almost all of them commanded by Men of St. Malo.' (1)

However strict the orders which they issued, the Chilean authorities were powerless to enforce them, and the position worsened when other French ships, returning to Europe from the northern ports, called at Concepcion, so that there were assembled in the roadstead, 'fifteen Sails of France, great and small, and about 2600 Men.'

'Tho' the Corregidor, or Governor, a mortal Enemy of the Nation, sought all Means to do Harm to the French, yet he could not have the Orders published against the French put in Execution, either because he was hindered by his own Interest, endeavouring to extort some Contribution from them, or because the Multitude imposed a little on him, or lastly because the Inhabitants privately dissuaded him that they might make the better Market of their Provisions. He was satisfied with offering all the Affronts he could to the Officers and Ships' Crews, as hamstringing their Horses, when they went out of Town to take the Air, imprisoning them upon the least Pretence of Misbehaviour, and talking to them in public in the vilest Language.'(2)

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(1) Ibid., pp. 279-80.
(2) Ibid., p. 280.

Frézier left in February 1717, in a convoy of four ships, although the others soon left his slower vessel behind. His gift of precise observation, never left him; never a man to fall a victim to excessive enthusiasm, he was among the first to cast doubts on the existence of the Southern Continent:

'If it be true, as many pretend, that the Ice in the Sea is only formed of the fresh Water, which runs down from the Land, it must be concluded that there is Land towards the South Pole; but it is not true that there are any more to the Northward than 63 degrees of Latitude for the Extent of above 200 Leagues, from 55 of Longitude to 80; for that Space has been run over by several Ships, which the S.W. and S.S.W. Winds have obliged to stand far to the Southward, to double the End of the Lands. Thus those Southern Lands, or Terra Australis, generally laid down in the old Charts, are meer Chimeras, which have been justly left out of the new Charts.'(1)

On his way back to France, where his work was highly regarded by the authorities, as well as by later navigators, he met the Fidèle (2) and other ships going to the South Sea

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(1) Ibid., p.284. This, of course, had been proved by the St. Louis in 1707-8. Frézier's comments show that the implications of the new route followed on that commercial voyage were understood at the time.

(2) Dahlgren 'Voyages Français,' No.116. The Fidèle did not return to France until 1718.

'as to a Treasure that is going to be shut up.' He had witnessed the beginning of the end of an episode that was never to be repeated.

During his voyage, Frézier had surveyed Le Maire Strait and part of the coast of Staten Island, and the west coast of Tierra del Fuego, correcting a considerable number of longitudes; his map of Southern America can be claimed to be the most accurate and reliable which had, so far, been drawn. His interest in botany caused him to look for unknown plants, and it was he who introduced to France the large Chilean strawberry which Bernard de Jussieu propagated successfully, and which, together with the North American strawberry, is the ancestor of the modern fruit. As was the case with so many other eighteenth century savants, his interests and his curiosity ranged over a wide field - mineralogy, earthquakes, climatology, the fauna of Peru, customs and local practices. What his observing eyes noticed, his able pen recorded, so that his book, when it appeared, was an instant success. It was soon reprinted in Amsterdam - and rapidly translated into English (1717), into German (1718) and into Dutch (1718); second editions were called for in Dutch (1727), in French (1732), and in German (1749).

Frézier's Voyage to the South Sea brought forth an attack from Feuillet, who claimed that Frézier had taken advantage of certain information which he had given to him just before

the publication of Feuillet's own Journal des Observations Physiques, and accused him of a number of errors. Frézier denied the former charge, and was able to defend himself from Feuillet's other accusations, although he admitted the older man's superior knowledge of botany. Of the two, Frézier was the better writer and the better geographer, while Feuillet, the better naturalist, was a duller writer. Together they added considerably to contemporary knowledge of the Pacific coast of America. Frézier, who lived on until 1773, was consulted by Bougainville, who met him and quotes him in his own account of his circumnavigation.

An event which was being awaited with growing interest by European scientists in the eighteenth century was the transit of Venus across the sun. This phenonemon is a comparatively rare one, occuring but four times in a period of 243 years, and at irregular intervals - 8, 121, 8, and 105 years. The eight-year interval provides the opportunity of verifying observations within a short-period, and of making them at different times from various points of the world's surface. It was to observe the transit that the Royal Society sent James Cook to Tahiti; the French were equally aware of the importance of this event - the question had been under consideration since 1750 - and, in 1760, it was decided to despatch the scientist Alexandre Guy Pingré, then aged 49, to Rodriguez Island in the Indian Ocean. In 1753, his observation of the transit of Mercury had earned him the title of corresponding member of the Paris Academy of Sciences, and he had later gone

on several scientific voyages during which he had tested the marine chronometers of Berthoud and Leroy. He sailed from Lorient in January 1761 in the Comte d'Argenson, whose captain, Marion du Fresne, was later to lead an expedition to the Pacific. Pingré arrived at Rodriguez in May 1761 and, although the weather was rather unsatisfactory, he was able to complete some observations of the eclipse on 6 June. As the result of a British raid on the island he was marooned until September, but eventually returned to the Ile de France and to Europe.(1) He pressed for a full scale expedition to the Pacific to observe the second transit, and he suggested as suitable locations for an observatory Easter Island or the Solomons;(2) but his advice was impracticable, and Pingré carried out his observations in Santo Domingo.

The Academy of sciences had, meanwhile, despatched two other scientists, Chappe d'Auteroche, who went to Russia (3), and Le Gentil de la Galaisière, whose voyage was to become a long, and often unhappy, Odyssey. Also a pupil of the Cassinis, he had written a number of scientific papers which had led to

(1) H. Woolf, The Transits of Venus, pp.111-112.
(2) Mémoire sur la Situation des Lieux les plus convenables à l'Observation du Passage de Venus sur le Soleil qui doit arriver le 3 Juin 1769, Paris, (1767), reprinted in Mémoire sur les Découvertes faites dans la Mer du Sud avant les derniers Voyages des Anglois et des François autour du Monde. Paris, (1778).
(3) Woolf, op.cit., pp.115-22.

his election to the Academy at the age of 28. He sailed from France on 26 March 1760 - during the Seven Years War - but he had to wait five months at the Ile de France before he found a ship willing to risk the voyage to Pondicherry, where he was to observe the transit. He was bitterly to regret having refused Pingré's offer to accompany him to Rodriguez Island, for, when he reached the French settlement, he found that it had fallen to the English, and the ship returned at once to Port Louis; Le Gentil was thus compelled to observe the phenomenon, very imperfectly, on the unstable deck of a frigate. At the end of June 1761 he was back in the Ile de France, determined to remain in the East until the second transit, in 1769. He spent the intervening eight years travelling to the Philippines, to China, to India. When the second transit took place, he was ready for it in Pondicherry - but the weather was overcast, and he failed again; he had waited eight years and travelled ten thousand leagues for nothing - or so he believed - and he had been away from France for so long that his heirs were claiming his property.(1).

When he finally returned to France he was a sad and disappointed man, but his spirits soon revived and, in 1779, he published the two monumental volumes that ensure his place in the history of travel and science.(2) These works are

(1) His full name was Guillaume Joseph Hyacinthe Jean Baptiste Le Gentil de la Galaisière, (1725-1792), and he is not to be confused with the navigator Le Gentil de la Barbinais.

(2) Voyage dans les Mers des Indes, fait par ordre du Roi à l'occasion du passage de Vénus sur le disque du soleil le 6 Juin 1761 et le 3 du même mois 1769, 2 vols; a condensed German translation was printed in Hamburg in 1780.

crammed with details on astronomy, navigation and natural history, but they also contain the keen observations of an educated traveller whose path cut across many important events - the aftermath of the English attack on Manila, the Seven Years' War in India, the expeditions of Bougainville,(1) of de Surville(2), and of Marion du Fresne whose offer of a passage to Tahiti he declined. His descriptions of life in Manila, Pondicherry and Madagascar are invaluable.

Another savant was the Abbé Alexis Rochon, born in Brest in 1741, whose interest in the naval sciences and in mathematics soon overcame an initial predilection for a religious life. He had travelled to Morocco in 1767 to test his theories on the reckoning of longitude; two years later he sailed to the Indian ocean and charted the dangers that are found on the shipping route from the Ile de France to India. At first attached to Kerguelen's first expedition - he claimed that, but for him, the Berrier would have missed its landfall at Mauritius (3) - he had hoped to sail into the Pacific with Marion du Fresne. Having failed in this, he consoled himself by publishing the account of the expedition, to which he added one of de Surville's. He returned to France to continue his scientific work, and to press for the establishment of a French bureau of longitudes, of which he eventually became a member.

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(1) He was a friend of the astronomer Véron.
(2) He observed the comet reported by the St. Jean Baptiste, and knew most of the backers of that venture.
(3) Voyages aux Indes Orientales et en Afrique pour l'Observation des Longitudes en Mer, pp. 302-4.

Those then were the men who provided the scientific background for the French exploration of the Pacific; there were others - specialists and administrators - such as Fleurieu, the two Buaches, Buffon, - who played their part in the various expeditions that set out during the second half of the eighteenth century. But men like de Brosses and Le Gentil are representative of the enquiring spirit of their age; their influence was largely indirect: they helped to create an atmosphere favourable to those whose eyes were turned towards the Pacific; they did not inspire de Surville, nor Marion du Fresne, nor Kerguelen, who were, first and foremost, sailors although they did arouse Bougainville's interest - for he was one of them, an educated man, with wide interests and an unquenchable curiosity - and after Bougainville's success, France was ready and eager to play her part in the story of the Pacific.

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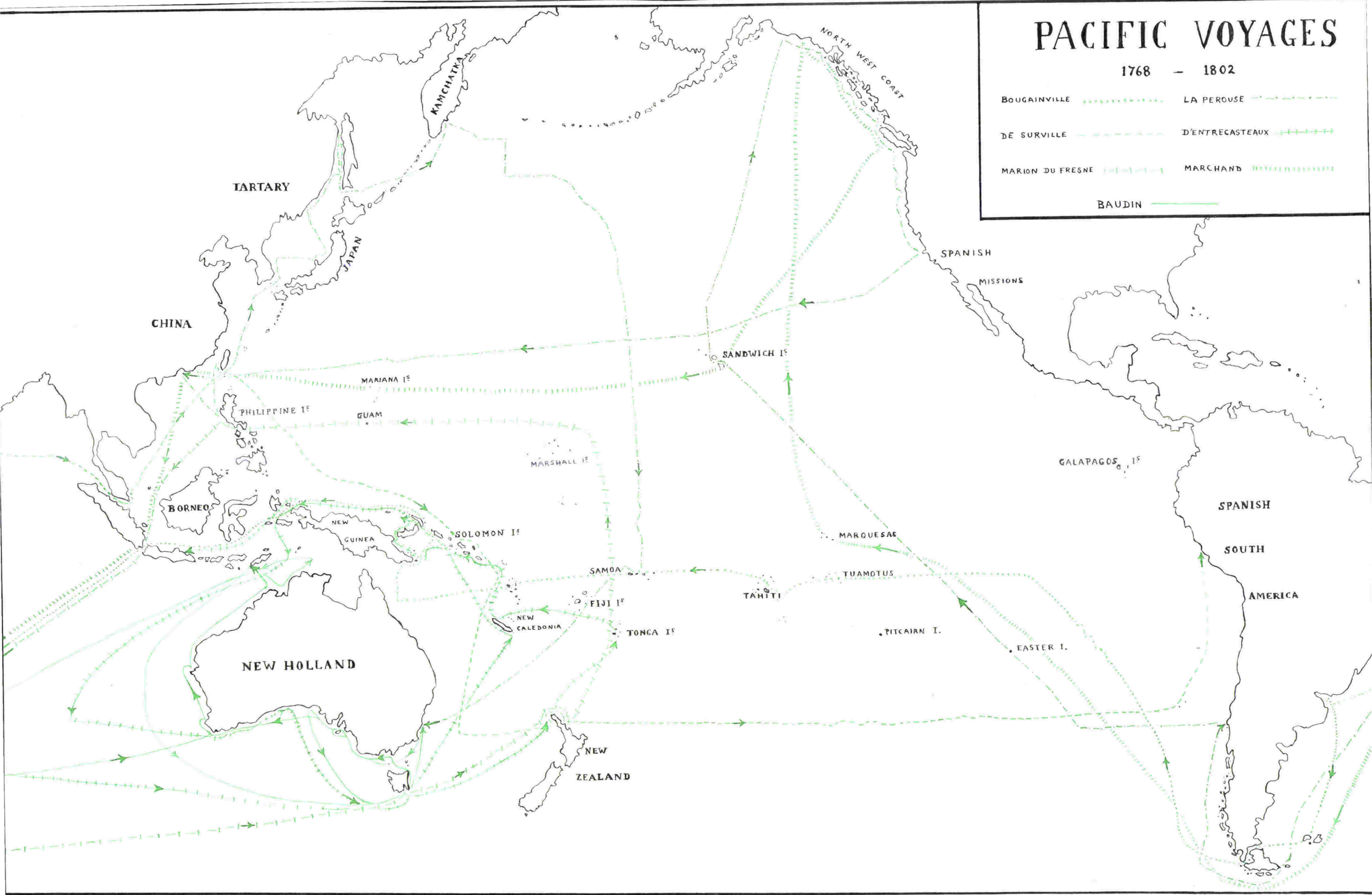
PART TWO

THE NAVIGATORS


PACIFIC VOYAGES
1768 – 1802
BOUGAINVILLE
LA PEROUSE
DE SURVILLE
D'ENTRECASTEAUX
MARION DU FRESNE
MARCHAND
BAUDIN
TARTARY
KAMCHATKA
NORTH WEST COAST
JAPAN
CHINA
SPANISH
MISSIONS
SANDWICH Is
MARIANA Is
PHILIPPINE Is
GUAM
MARSHALL Is
GALAPAGOS Is
BORNEO
NEW
GUINEA
SOLOMON Is
MARQUESAS
SPANISH
SOUTH
AMERICA
SAMOA
TUAMOTUS
TAHITI
FIJI Is
NEW
CALEDONIA
TONGA Is
PITCAIRN I.
EASTER I.
NEW HOLLAND
NEW
ZEALAND

Nº 1

BOUGAINVILLE

The Seven Years' War, which exhausted France economically and ended her domination of Europe under the Ancient Regime, had also far-reaching effects overseas, bringing to an end the French colonial development of Canada and India. Although to some the loss of the two empires was of little consequence, to many Frenchmen the new situation appeared both humiliating and dangerous.

Their British rivals were no longer laying the foundations for an overseas empire, they were consolidating it. The future now loomed dark, with Britain apparently set on world supremacy, if not on world conquest. It was a fear that was to come to the forefront during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars; it was then bolstered by the belief that Britain wished to restore the Ancient Regime because the new France was a danger to British ambitions. (1)

In a climate of opinion dominated by a growing awareness that the struggle for supremacy was rapidly nearing its climax, the uppermost thought of politicians and patriots was that the peace was only a temporary truce, forced on the combatants by sheer exhaustion. It was clear that, when the fight was resumed, it would again be fought on a global scale; it was therefore necessary to plan right away the strategy of the next phase.

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(1) The British view of the Napoleonic Wars as an attempt on their part to protect Europe from French hegemony is of course paralleled by the obverse French view.

One obvious step was the occupation of unsettled territories at key points on sea routes, in order to forestall some of the colonial moves of the British, and to provide new bases to make up for the old ones that had been lost. It was a policy rendered even more desirable by the closing of Canada to French immigration, and the restricted opportunities for trade expansion in the Indian Ocean. It was also, unfortunately, something which the French government was in no position to carry out officially. It was thus left to individuals to seek what openings there might be for themselves and for their country. The expeditions of Bougainville, of de Surville and of Marion du Fresne stem directly from this situation.

Bougainville had served in Canada as aide-de-camp to Montcalm, rising to the rank of colonel, and earning the Cross of St. Louis. This service placed him in an excellent position to appreciate the frustrations resulting from France's inability to send help to her North American territories. When Quebec fell, with the deaths of both Wolfe and Montcalm, the sad task of negotiating the surrender of the city and of supervising the evacuation of the French troops had fallen to his lot. In 1760, he left Canada.(1)

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(1) Also present at the siege of Quebec, though on the opposite side, was Captain Samuel Wallis who was later to precede Bougainville, by one year, at Tahiti. See H. Carrington (ed.) The Discovery of Tahiti, p. xxxv.

The European war was then dragging towards its exhausted close; there was little more he could do in the struggle but, when peace came, he found that France had little that she could offer him. He was thirty-one and, to all intents and purposes, out of work. The Army, after the disastrous war, had little need for his services; the law he had already rejected after a brief attempt, in his youth, to follow in what would have been his father's footsteps; a diplomatic career, on which he had embarked just before the war,(1) required continued patronage and patience, and did not really suit his adventurous temperament. He knew that the peace was only a temporary respite and that his services would be required again. If he could employ his talents until then in such a way that his country's position would be strengthened when war broke out again, he would be happy.

He had read Charles de Brosses's book on the Pacific, and its influence has already been noted. The voyage of Anson had made it abundantly clear to him that the time was fast approaching when Britain would turn her attention to this still largely unknown sea and its undiscovered islands.(2)

(1) He was secretary at the French embassy in London until diplomatic relations were broken off in 1755. For Bougainville's early career, the most varied of any French navigator of his time, see J. Lefranc, Bougainville et ses Compagnons, pp. 13 et seq.; R. de Kerallain, La Jeunesse de Bougainville, and Maurice Thiery, Bougainville, Soldier and Sailor.

(2) See J. E. Martin, 'Essai sur Bougainville', in La Géographie, November-December 1929, pp. 330-1.

The Southern Ocean opened out before him, full of promise, practically abandoned by the Spaniards and the Dutch, awaiting only a nation powerful enough to seize it - and that could only be either France or Britain. A third influence was at work on him, for he had been impressed by Frézier's work - Frézier who, half a century earlier, had stressed the strategic value of the eastern Pacific.(1) It was probably Frézier who led him to look first at the Magellanic side of the Pacific. As we have seen, it was the traditional French way of entry to the Pacific, although one that made it extremedly difficult to seek the southern continent in a high latitude, on account of the prevailing winds. De Brosses had suggested entering the sea from the Indian Ocean: from Pondicherry or the Ile de France. 'It is easier,' he wrote, 'to go to New Guinea than to the Philippines or China, where Spanish ships as well as ours go every day: especially by leaving from the nearby settlements that we have at Pondicherry... It is to this side that we must pay attention, because it is on this side that the great continents are situated.'(2) Bougainville, however, was first attracted by strategic considerations: 'Seeing that the North was closed to us, I thought of means to give to my country in the southern hemisphere what she no longer possesses in the northern one. I searched and I found the Malouine Island (sic)'.(3)

He felt that, if the deserted Faklands could be held by France

(1) J. Goebels, The Struggle for the Falkland Islands, p. 237.
(2) De Brosses, Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes, vol.II, p. 368.
(3) Note by Bougainville, dated 4 July 1764; B.N., N.A.F. 9407-11. The name Malouine derived from the discoveries and sightings made by ships from St Malo during the period of South American trade.

they would bar the way to British ambitions in the Eastern Pacific, just as the Ile de France could threaten British shipping lanes to India and the East - and had not Drake and Anson entered the Pacific from the east ?

Furthemore the possibility of establishing a French settlement on the Falklands had been under consideration for nearly half a century. Laurens Olivier in the Comte de Lamoignon had seen three islands in this neighbourhood, and he advised a more careful survey by a French expedition, as it appeared suitable for a settlement and as a port of call.(1) The matter was again raised by Laurens Olivier in 1750, but others, notably Duquesnel (2) and Doublet pressed for a settlement. 'It would be very easy and not costly to settle there, and in a short while to provide them with all kinds of plants and grain crops and vegetables, as also to populate them with cattle and fowls, and there is fish in abundance, and this discovery would deserve attention.' (3)

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(1) Copie du Journal du Sieur Laurens Olivier, 1714,B.N. N.A.F. 9438.

(2) Lettre sur l'Etablissement à faire aux îles Cébaldes, 24 May 1714. B.N., N.A.F. 9438.

(3) Relation de la nouvelle découverte des Iles Cébaldes, B.N., N.A.F. 9438.

Not only did strategic considerations direct his attention towards the Falklands, but he numbered among his friends men who had sailed through the Straits of Magellan. Duclos-Guyot, who was later to be his second-in-command on the Boudeuse, had sailed to the Pacific on a Spanish ship and had rediscovered, after La Roche, South Georgia; (1) de la Rigaudière, who taught him the art of navigation, was a relative, and probably the son, of Froger de la Rigaudière who had sailed to the Spanish Pacific in the days of the French traders.(2) From men like these, he would have been able to obtain the confirmation of his views that the Falklands were valuable strategic outposts, the key to the Straits and to the Pacific.

The settlement of the islands did not present much more difficulty. They were situated in a harsh climate, it is true, but no worse than that of Canada-whence what we might call today 'displaced persons' had returned to France: Bougainville's Canadian connections thus dovetailed with his adventurous plans, for there were hardy pioneers from Nova Scotia willing to try their chance in a new country. The political motives merged with the spirit of enterprise and

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(1) 'That, in the whole affair, the assistance of Duclos-Guyot was important cannot be denied, for, of all those concerned, he was the only one to know the area where they were to land, and to be in a position to give informed advice.' J.E. Martin, 'Essai sur Bougainville,' p. 336.

(2) Ibid., p. 324; E.W. Dahlgren, 'Voyages à destination de la Mer du Sud avant Bougainville,' No. 46.

it only remained for the king to approve the scheme. This presented no difficulty (1). France's first colonial venture since before the war was under way.

'Their happy situation as a port of call for ships on their way to the South Sea, and as a step towards the discovery of Southern lands had impressed navigators of all nations. At the beginning of 1763, the French court decided to form a settlement on these islands. I proposed to the Ministry to establish it at my own expense and, assisted by M. de Nerville and M. d'Arboulin, the one my cousin, the other my uncle,(2) I had built and equipped in St. Malo, under the supervision of M. Duclos-Guyot, who is today my second-in-command, the Aigle, of 20 guns, and the Sphinx, of 12, which I fitted out with all that was needed for such an enterprise. I took on board several Acadian(3) families, hardworking and intelligent people who should be dear to France on account of the unwavering loyalty shown by these honest and unfortunate citizens... We arrived on 31 January 1764. To strengthen the confidence of

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(1) J.E. Martin, 'Essai sur Bougainville,' pp. 336-7.
(2) Investments of approximately 200,000 livres were made at this time: Bougainville 91,000, de Nerville 70,000, d'Arboulin 31,000. Mémoire of 4 August 1764, B.N., N.A.F. 9407-12/13.
(3) The Acadians, French settlers in Nova Scotia and part of New Brunswick, had passed under British domination in 1713. During the Seven Years' War, the British deported them, and destroyed their settlements. The story is the one told in Longfellow's Evangeline.

the colonists ... M. de Nerville agreed to remain at their head. I left on April 8, and returned on 5 January 1765... I found the colonists in excellent health... Only one had died - as a result of a hunting accident.' (1)

The Falkland Islands providing practically no wood of any kind, Bougainville sailed to nearby Patagonia to obtain supplies. There he saw three ships - those of Byron - which appeared to be about to sail through the Straits on the first stage of their circumnavigation. (2) He also took steps to establish friendly relations with the natives - the French's nearest neighbours - his experience with the Indian auxiliaries who had assisted the French in Canada, proving of value now, as it was to do later in the Pacific.

And so the colony prospered, as rapidly as the harsh climate and the isolation permitted. The British, however, were perfectly aware of the importance of the Falklands, over which they had their own claims to press based on prior discovery - by John Davis in 1592, by Richard Hawkins in 1594, by William Dampier in 1683 and by Captain Strong in 1690. Did Bougainville's plan spur the British into action? It seems likely, for they had hoped to establish a settlement on the Falklands themselves many years before, on Anson's

(1) L.A. de Bougainville, Voyage autour du Monde par la frégate du Roi La Boudeuse et la flûte l'Etoile en 1766,1767,1768 et 1769, (Paris, 1771), pp.48-55. John Reinhold Forster in his translation omits the words 'as a step towards the discovery of Southern lands',; see A Voyage round the World..., p. 37.

(2) Two sailed through; the third was a store ship sent back from Port Famine. See infra p. ///.

recommendation, and had only given up their plan in the face of vehement Spanish protests. (1) But if the British were willing to desist in favour of the Spanish - who had no intention of doing anything themselves - it did not mean that they were prepared to allow the French to step in.

As Bougainville states, the French court had agreed to his plan at the beginning of 1763. In June of the following year, Captain Byron was instructed to proceed to Plymouth with his ship, the Dolphin, and was handed instructions which included the exploration of the Falkland Islands. The inference that the British were aware that something was afoot, and that an on-the-spot investigation was needed, is obvious. (2) Byron wasted no time. In January 1765, the desolate northern coastline was charted from its western to its eastern extremity, a distance of some seventy leagues. A large and commodious harbour was discovered in Western Falkland, which was named Port Egmont in honour of the First Lord of the Admiralty. Marks of possession were erected and vegetable gardens were laid out. (3)

It was not so complete a survey as the Admiralty had hoped, and it failed to reveal the existence of the French

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(1) B.G. Corney, The Quest and Occupation of Tahiti, vol. I, pp. xx-xxi.

(2) Although there is no real evidence in this particular instance, it is clear that the British were being kept well informed of developments in France. Vincent T. Harlow, in his The Founding of the Second British Empire, vol. I, p. 28n., quotes a report 'Intelligence concerning the Maloccines Islands...', consisting of information collected in St. Malo, and dated 3 June 1766. There is no reason to believe that there were no earlier reports.

(3) Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, vol. I, p. 25.

settlement,(1) but Byron saw Bougainville in the Straits when the latter was getting firewood for his colonists, and the storeship Florida, which Byron sent back to England, brought back news of the encounter. Within three months of the Florida's return, the Admiralty had despatched the Jason, Captain Macbride, with orders to establish a settlement on the Falklands. 'If any subjects of a foreign Power were found to be settled at any point in the Islands, they were to be visited and informed that the Islands belonged to Great Britain, and that, since His Majesty had given orders for the settlement thereof, the subjects of no other Power were entitled to reside there without the King's permission. Any such persons were to be offered transport on His Majesty's ships to some port in the Dominions of the Power to which they belonged.' (2)

But there was more trouble in store for Bougainville. He had indeed stirred a hornets' nest. The Spanish government was now entering the fray, because the islands were geographically part of South America, and thus within the Spanish colonial empire.(3) The Spanish had learned in September 1764 from Montevideo that the French were planning a settlement (4)

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(1) Though Carrington, The Discovery of Tahiti, p. 268, states that Byron knew of its existence. This, presumably, means that he 'surmised' it. The instructions issued to Macbride, the Jason's captain indicate that the Admiralty suspected the existence of a foreign settlement, without, however, having any real evidence.

(2) Harlow, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 26-7. The full instructions are reprinted in B. G. Corney, The Quest and Occupation of Tahiti, vol. II, pp. 441-5.

(3) There was even the possibility of a case - though a weak one - being made out for prior discovery by Amerigo Vespucci in 1501-2, although on that occasion Vespucci was sailing under Portuguese auspices.

(4) Harlow, op. cit., p. 27. And if the Spanish knew, then presumably the British knew also.

and they had made immediate representations to the French government. They did not openly oppose such a plan (1) - for they were allied to France by the Family Compact - but they put forward the argument that it was a dangerous precedent, which other nations might be tempted to follow. With tact, they pointed out that, while they had nothing to fear from their French allies, the settlement by foreigners of land that was nominally Spanish was bound to involve the Spanish crown in difficulties. This began a diplomatic struggle that has lasted well into our own time. (2)

At first, the French, under Choiseul, an enlightened Minister of Marine, were not willing to sacrifice so easily a settlement that held interesting possibilities once France recovered from the weakness induced by the war. But to hold on to the Falklands would definitely mean alienating Spain, and possibly lead to a war with the third interested party - England - for which France was prepared neither militarily nor morally. Pressure was therefore put on Bougainville to abandon the settlement, and to recognise the Spanish claim. Bougainville himself went to Madrid (3) to discuss the matter with the French ambassador and the Spanish government. The case seemed unanswerable:

(1) Bougainville had not expected them to. 'An island two hundred leagues in circumference, to which Spain could hardly lay claim.' he told Choiseul; J.E. Martin, 'Essai sur Bougainville,' p. 337.

(2) See on this J. Goebel, The Struggle for the Falkland Islands, (New Haven, 1927), a valuable, though pro-Argentine, work.

(3) Maurice Thiery, Bougainville, Soldier and Sailor, p. 140 and D. Pernetty, Histoire d'un Voyage aux Iles Malouines fait en 1763 et 1764, vol. II, p. 103.

ambassador and the Spanish government. The case seemed unanswerable: if Bougainville were to leave the island, and thus enable France to recognise Spain's right to the Malouines, the Boubon ranks would be closed, and the British case considerably weakened. Right of ownership by prior discovery was the only claim the British could fall back on, once the French had admitted that their own earlier settlement infringed Spanish sovereignty. And ownership by mere prior discovery (1) was not a principle that the British were anxious to establish in international law.

Bougainville was thus asked to withdraw his colony by an amicable settlement that would avoid any shadow of a breach between France and Spain. Louis XV sympathised with the young colonel's disappointment, and the King of Spain was equally willing to cushion the blow; there was no point in ruining the pleasant Frenchman, and it was easier to placate him, so as to concentrate against the British. The King of France offered Bougainville the governorship of the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon, but his heart was set on another consolation prize, and he opted for a voyage around the world which would take him through the Pacific. (2)

(1) Prior discovery, unaccompanied by physical occupation, was not generally recognised by the British as bestowing rights of ownership on the nation of the discoverer.

(2) Baron de Bougainville, 'Journal de la Navigation autour du Globe de la THETIS et de la corvette l'ESPERANCE,' Vol. I. p. 582. Bougainville was not the only Frenchman who was planning a voyage to the Pacific at this time. Bouvet, the discoverer of the island that bears his name, presented a plan for a voyage on 10 January 1767. He asked for three ships for a two-year voyage to the southern Indian Ocean, Tasmania, New Zealand and the New Hebrides. Mémoire touchant la découverte des terres Australes, B.N., N.A.F. 9439/53.

The King of Spain agreed to pay 603,000 livres, the value of Bougainville's investment with interest at five per cent up to April, 1767. True, since France was recognising the legality of the Spanish claim, there was no obligation on Madrid's part to pay anything, but the Spanish were to take over all the equipment and supplies, and it was a simple and inexpensive solution to the problem. 'This Monarch, just as he was generous, wished to repay our advances, and the said sum was paid to us by the Treasurers, partly in Paris, partly in Buenos Ayres.' (1)

Bougainville was to hand over the settlement at Port St. Louis, on the first stage of his circumnavigation. Once the terms had been agreed upon, all that remained was to prepare the voyage. Assisted by the eager de Brosses, he supervised the arrangements. Buffon put forward the name of Commerson as a suitable naturalist to accompany the expedition, the Académie des Sciences proffered advice, the Ministries cooperated with cheerful plump Bougainville, who had once been a protégé of the Pompadour (2) and whose enthusiasm was hard to dampen.

Two ships were placed at Bougainville's disposal. The frigate La Boudeuse, of 26 guns, was not among the finest of the king's ships, and there was some doubt at the start as to whether it was wise to embark on such a journey with

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(1) Bougainville, 'Voyage de la BOUDEUSE,' p. 46n.
(2) Maurice Thiery, Bougainville, Soldier and Sailor, p. 23.

her. The storeship l'Etoile was more sturdy, and Bougainville consoled himself with the thought that, if the worst happened it would be possible to reach safety in her. She was commanded by Chesnard de la Giraudais,(1) whose second-in-command was Caro,(2) a lieutenant in the service of the French India Company. The main personality in the storeship, however, was Philibert Commerson, 'the Royal botanist and naturalist', on the verge of forty, a widower, cranky, bubbling over with ideas and enthusiasm. (3) Like all landsmen in ships, he was annoyed by the indifference of the naval men, who were ignorant of the natural sciences, and who pursued their petty squabbles with incomprehensible intensity. The Etoile he described as 'that hellish den where hatred, insubordination, bad faith, brigandage, cruelty and all kinds of disorders reign.'(4) With Commerson went his valet, Baret, whose secret, not pierced until much later, finds echoes in the voyages of Marion du Fresne, Kerguelen and de Freycinet.

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(1) François Chesnard de la Giraudais had been in command of the Machault, part of the convoy with which Bougainville (in the Chézine) had sailed from France to Canada in 1759. J.E.Martin, 'Essai sur Bougainville,' p.326.
(2) Caro l'Ainé, as he signs himself at the end of his Journal.
(3) J.Lefranc, Bougainville et ses Compagnons, pp.79 et seq. A biography was written in 1889 by F.B.de Montessus under the title Martyrologe et Biographie de Commerson. A biography in English, The Life of Philibert Commerson: an Old World Story of French Travel and Science in the Days of Linnaeus, by S.P.Oliver, edited by G.Scott Elliot, following Oliver's death in 1907, appeared in London in 1909.
(4) J.Lefranc, op.cit., p.93.

Commerson, like many others on the voyage, wrote copious notes, but few have survived: he was far more interested in science than in literary fame - in spite of a lively style that might have produced an interesting travel story.

The same modesty characterised the surgeon Vivès, a quiet, humdrum man to whom the voyage was the greatest adventure. His Voyage autour du Monde exists only in manuscript form, because, Bougainville's own book having appeared while he was still completing his own version, Vivès felt that he could add little to what his leader had written. (1)

The Boudeuse was commanded by Bougainville himself with, as his second-in command, Duclos-Guyot (2), his friend, with whom he had planned the settlement on the Falklands. The clerk, Louis Antoine Starot de Saint-Germain de Loberie, is numbered among those who have left an account of the expedition (3). No intrepid explorer, he bitterly regretted having embarked on such a journey, although in fairness to him it must be admitted that his despondency stemmed from having had to forsake a wife whom he had only recently married (4), and that his acid comments

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(1) Ibid., pp. 94 et seq.
(2) Also spelled du Clos-Guyot, Ducloz-Guyot and Guyot-Ducloz. Pierre Nicolas Duclos-Guyot (1722-1794) had already sailed to the Pacific coast of South America, and had rediscovered an island in the South Atlantic which was later identified as South Georgia, previously discovered by La Roche in 1675. He met Bougainville in Quebec in 1758.
(3) An account of his journal is given in 'Routier inédit d'un compagnon de Bougainville', by Ch. de la Roncière in La Géographie, March 1921, vol XXXV, No. 3.
(4) He had married Marie-Françoise Borderieux on 21 January 1765. He was no volunteer, having received 'from the King order to embark as clerk on Bougainville's vessel.' His normal occupation was that of lawyer. See Ibid., p. 218.

were not devoid of pertinency: 'What is the use of this voyage?' he asked, a question which sounds querulous, but which, as we shall see, was not altogether irrelevant. He was left behind at the Isle de France in a poor state of health, as is shown by a certificate of discharge which Bougainville must have signed with considerable relief.(1) The young astronomer Véron, or Verron, proved invaluable to Bougainville, and was able to work out longitudes with considerable accuracy.

The last notable personality, Charles Nicolas Othon, Prince de Nassau-Siegen, was no more eccentric than the others, but he was certainly more wealthy and of a higher rank. He had obtained the King's leave to join Bougainville out of a spirit of adventure, although one cannot help feeling that his companions, being of modest families, may have at times regretted his presence on board. He was proud, impetuous, somewhat troublesome to his leader, and rather inclined to duels. Since, however, there were no opportunities for these at sea, he consoled himself by going hunting whenever he could, and by impressing the natives with his courage.(2) Bougainville himself, who was to lead this heterogeneous collection of men, was officially a colonel in the army and not a sailor. He

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(1) His health was soon restored, and he outlived practically all the other participants in the expedition, dying in 1823 at the age of 92.

(2) A friend of Catherine II, he eventually became a Russian admiral, and was buried in the Ukraine. A study of his later life has been published by the Marquis d'Aragon under the title of Un Paladin au XVIIIe siècle, le Prince Charles de Nassau-Siegen, (Paris 1893). See Lefranc, op. cit., pp. 102 et seq.

had never served in ships until his Falklands adventure, and had had no formal naval training of any kind. He had apparently acquired his knowledge of navigation and sailing while crossing the Atlantic on various missions during the war.(1) Allowing for the fact that a ship on which he was a passenger was delayed by coastal ice, he would have spent a total of only five months at sea by 1763, so that it is probable that, during the earlier part of his circumnavigation, he leaned heavily on his friend Duclos-Guyot. He was, however, a man of outstanding mathematical ability, and had written a treatise on the calculus at the age of 22.(2) Nevertheless, his ad hoc appointment to the rank of 'capitaine de vaisseau' in the royal navy cannot have failed to give rise to jealousy and protests within the service, especially as Bougainville did not even belong to the higher nobility.

His instructions required him to go to China, but the discoveries which he made south of the Equator, and the condition of his crew, kept him away from the China Seas: it cannot be said that a final loop towards the Far East would have added very much to his achievements. The instructions, anyhow, were elastic enough for him to ignore that section.

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(1) 'M. de la Rigaudière [commanding the ship that took him to Canada in 1756] has promised to teach me as much seamanship as can be done during the crossing.' Letter from Bougainville to his brother, 29 March 1756, quoted by R. de Kerallain, La Jeunesse de Bougainville, p.38

(2) Entitled Traité du calcul intégral, pour faire suite à l'analyse des infiniments petits de Marquis de l'Hôpital; Maurice Thiery, Bougainville, Soldier and Sailor, p.25.

'After the handing over of the Malouines Islands to the Spaniards, and the arrival of the flute l'Etoile, M. de Bougainville will leave with his two ships and sail for China by the South Sea. He may go through the Straits of Magellan or round Cape Horn, as the season and the winds warrant. On his crossing to China, he will examine in the Pacific Ocean as many of and in the best manner he can the lands lying between the Indies and the western seaboard of America, various parts of which have been sighted by Navigators and named Espiritu Santo, New Guinea, etc. Since knowledge of the islands or continent is very slight, it will be very interesting to perfect it; furthermore, since no European nation has any settlement on, or claim over, these islands, it can only be to France's advantage to survey them, and to take possession of them if they offer articles of value to her trade and her navigation.

'In this sea, the area which M. de Bougainville must pay particular attention is that to lying between 40° of southern latitude towards the North, and what lies between the two tropics. It is in those latitudes that are found precious metals and spices. M. de Bougainville will study the land, the trees and principal products; he will bring back samples and drawings of everything he considers merits attention; he will examine to the fullest extent possible all sites likely to be used as ports of call for ships, and everything appertaining to navigation ... He will direct his route so as to be able to leave China at the end of January 1768 at the latest ..His Majesty requests M. de

Bougainville to seek, if he can, some island close to the Chinese coast, which could be used as a commercial centre for the Compagnie des Indes for trade with China... His Majesty leaves him the option to call or not to call on the coast of China. He will let himself be ruled on this point by the circumstances in which he finds himself. In any case, M. de Bougainville will do all in his power to call at the Ile de France, so as to be informed whether peace is continuing or whether we are at war with any country, and whether His Majesty has not sent instructions there concerning the possible destination of the two ships?' (1)

The Instructions also allowed him to burn or sell one of the ships, should his crew become too depleted or for some other reason.

The expedition set sail from Nantes on 15 November 1766. Misfortune struck almost immediately - a storm broke the topmast and caused other damage, forcing the ships to put into Brest for repairs. Bougainville seized the occasion to decrease the height of the masts, and to exchange his heavy guns for others of smaller calibre, while obtaining permission to send back the Boudeuse from the Falkland Islands and to sail on in the Etoile, if the condition of his ship worsened. (2)

(1) 'Mémoire du Roy pour servir d'Instructions au Sieur de Bougainville, Colonel d'Infanterie et Capitaine de Vaisseau pour la Campagne sur les opérations qu'il va faire,' 26 October 1766. BN, NAF, 9407, p. 53.
(2) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, pp. 21-2.

On 5 December, the Boudeuse sailed alone from Brest and, on the last day of January 1767, she lay at anchor in Montevideo harbour. Accompanied by Spanish ships, Bougainville went down to the Falklands for the sad ceremony. The Spanish standard was raised, and saluted by twenty-one guns at sunrise and at sunset by the land battery and by the ships. The colonists were despondent, but not really surprised, for they had already been warned that their settlement was insecure when Macbride had called on them in December. (1) Bougainville read them a letter from the king, authorising them to remain under Spanish rule if they wished, an offer which a number of the Acadians accepted. Ten of them were taken on as sailors by Bougainville, to replace some of his who were sick. (2) The French colonisation of the Falkland Islands was now at an end.

Bougainville waited another two months, hoping that the Etoile would join him. He finally decided to sail to Rio de Janeiro and, on June 2, he left for ever the islands which had been so much in his thoughts during the previous five years. (3)

(1) Vincent T. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, vol. I, pp. 28-9.
(2) Bougainville to Minister of Marine, 19 April 1767, B.N., N.A.F. 9407/25.
(3) France abided by her agreement with Spain and no further attempt was made to plant a French settlement on the islands. The struggle with Britain continued until 1774 when the British evacuated Port Egmont. The Spanish themselves left in 1811, leaving the way open for British re-occupation in 1832. Harlow, op. cit. ~~Ibid.~~, pp. 28-32.

In Rio, where he found the Etoile,(1) Bougainville fell a victim to a matter of etiquette that may seem puerile to our eyes, until we realise that we are equally concerned with matters of precedence and of diplomatic recognition. When a ship called at a foreign port, it saluted the flag with its guns; to this the garrison was expected to reply, and the number of shots to be fired by each side provided endless scope for argument. Bougainville sent one of his ensigns, the Chevalier de Bournand, to negotiate with the viceroy, who answered that, when he saluted someone in the street, he did not first enquire whether his courtesy would be returned. It was a logical enough comment but, as he well knew, it was not a reply. Bougainville, therefore, did not salute the town for four days ~~when~~ after which, upon an official visit to the Boudeuse, the viceroy received a salute of nineteen guns which was duly returned.

Relations, having been thus established upon an unsure footing, became in time more strained. During a brief period of cordiality, the French were invited to the Opera, where they listened to 'the divine music of the great Italian masters, played by a bad orchestra under the direction of a hunchback priest in religious dress.'(2) Soon, however, fights broke out between the Portuguese and men on shore leave, the chaplain of the Etoile had already been found murdered,(3)

(1) The Etoile had sailed from Rochefort on 1 Feb.1767, and had arrived at Rio on 12 June 1767. La Girandais, Journal, dates as quoted.
(2) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p.77
(3) 'On the 18 of this month in the evening our chaplain was murdered on land and thrown into the water?' La Girandais, Journal, June 1767.

while the viceroy's attitude rapidly became hostile; it was still winter and no time to begin the journey through the Straits of Magellan. They decided to hasten their departure for Montevideo, where they could be sure of a more favourable reception. Even so, they met with misfortune there, for a Spanish vessel collided with the Etoile.(1)

It was not until ~~the~~ 14 November 1767 - a year, practically to the day, since they had sailed from Nantes - that they finally left the Atlantic coast and set out on their voyage of circumnavigation. They had finished their work and now could claim their reward. Bougainville had made careful preparations - the sick and the older sailors who might have proved liabilities were left behind, their number being made up by the others recruited from the Falklands. Supplies were as good as could be expected, although a storm that struck them within a few days of their departure resulted in the death of nearly all their livestock.

The Straits fully lived up to their evil reputation. The Ships spent four days trying to enter but, after a full week, they had only penetrated as far as the second narrows. On December 18, they anchored in Bougainville Bay, on Brunswick Peninsula, approximately seven miles to the south of Cape Isidoro, and not far from present-day Puntas Arenas. There, they remained for twelve days; it was a welcome break after

(1) 'The Spanish vessel named the San Fernando dragged on her anchors and broke our bowsprit.' Ibid., 18 August 1767.

a fortnight of continual tacking and sounding - in addition to which the Etoile had developed a leak. The Prince went botanising with Commerson, and later accompanied Bougainville to the Tierra del Fuego coast opposite the anchorage, where they sounded and charted the inhospitable shore.

The next anchorage, Fortescue Bay, which they reached on New Year's Day, was even less attractive. The weather - it being then the height of the southern summer - was appalling: 'Nix, glando, glacies, spiritus procellarum.' (1) In the morning, they found four inches of snow on the decks. After a fortnight they tried to leave, but storms forced them back; a gale blew, so wild that even the oldest sailors were frightened. Finally, the wind abated, and even turned in their favour. On 26 January the weary Frenchmen saw the open sea, and the nightmare - nearly two months long - was behind them. In the evening, Bougainville passed Cape Pilar, at the western end of the straits, taking a point to the west of it (2) as his point of departure, and then sailed into the Pacific. It was a day of great rejoicing and, to celebrate their deliverance, they sang the Te Deum. (3)

Now Nature, which had thwarted Bougainville for so long, began to favour him. A steady south-easterly wind enabled him to omit a proposed call at Juan Fernandez and to

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(1) Bougainville, Voyage, (1771), p.154. Cf. Psalms 148:8, 'Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling his word.'

(2) He gives his point of departure as 52°50' south and 74°29' west. Voyage (1771), p.172. Cape Pilar is in 52°43' south and 73°43' west.

(3) *Journal du Sieur Carof.. , A.N.M. 4.JJ. No.1/5. Entry of 27 January 1768.

begin a search for what he called David's Land, (1) which was reputed to lie 500 leagues off the coast of South America along the 27th degree of latitude. He was careful to sweep as wide an area as possible: the Etoile veered south of the Boudeuse each morning at first light, and went as far as she could without losing sight of the other ship; lock-outs were continually on duty; and, in the evening, the two ships rejoined to within half a league of each other, in order to be available in case of trouble. (2) In spite of this, Bougainville was no more fortunate than Roggeween had been forty-six years earlier. After a week he gave up, having sailed, according to his charts, right across David's Land, and expressing scepticism abouts its existence. (3)

At the beginning of March, he started up a distilling machine that was to provide the men of the Boudeuse with over a barrelfull of drinking water daily for a great part of the voyage. (4) The course, roughly WNW, to which the French were keeping, was taking them across the great emptiness of the S.E. Pacific, over part of which Wallis had ventured the year before. It was not until 22 March that land was sighted. They had a warning on the previous day

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(1) J.R. Forster, in his translation of Bougainville's account, p.201n., criticises him for writing David, instead of Davis, commenting 'indeed he and most writers of his nation mutilate all foreign names; not only inadvertently, but often on purpose through mere caprice,' an unfair charge, particularly since the term David's Land was also in use in England and Spain; cf. B.G. Corney, The Voyage of Don Felipe Gonzalez, pp. XVI and 59.

(2) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p.177. Bougainville, Journal, entry of 7-8 February 1768. (3) 'I have passed over David's Land without sighting it' Journal, 13-14 February 1768. As he did not attach a great deal of importance to this search, fairly perfunctorily carried out, a discussion of Davis Land will be left to the Chapter dealing with de Surville, see pp. 198-200

(4) Bougainville, Journal, 4-5 March 1768.

of the proximity of land, when a tuna fish gave up, upon dissection, some small shallow-water fish as yet undigested in its stomach.

'At 6 a.m. the lookout on the maintop said that he saw land which we sighted at once from the poopdeck, lying S.E. by ¼S, 4 leagues off, which appeared to be several islands. The lookout counted 7 or 8....Soon after, the lookout said that he saw another island before us which we sighted from below lying to W.5°S. At once, we signalled the Boudeuse that land was in sight, and set course at the same time for W. by ¼ N.W. and W. by N.W. to pass to the north of the same island.' (1)

In fact, only five islands are listed in the account of the voyage - one group of four to the South East, which Bougainville named Les Quatre Facardins, after a popular story of the day, (2) and a fifth to the West. Thinking that it should be possible to find an anchorage there, he turned towards it, but the line of breakers foiled this plan. To his surprise, he saw men, whom for a moment he took for European castaways, hardly believing that such a small island could be inhabited. More appeared, however, and it was seen that they were natives. 'They carried very long pikes which they shook menacingly at the ships ...I called it the 'ile des Lanciers' (3)

On the following day, having sailed W¼NW, Bougainville

(1) Caro, Journal, 21-22 March 1768.
(2) Written by the Jacobite, Count Anthony Hamilton (1645(?) -1720), and first published posthumously in 1730.
(3) On board the Etoile, they called the island 'ile Garnie' because of the luxuriant vegetation. Vivès, Journal, p. 98.

sighted a bow-shaped coral island which he named Harp Island.(1) The shape of this island enables it to be identified with Cook's Bow Island, which is now known by its native name of Hao. Bougainville would have liked to have landed here to discover more about the people and their island, but the dangerous reef made this impossible. (2) The Frenchmen's curiosity was great, but all they could do was to speculate about the natives who lived their mysterious lives on these isolated atolls.

'This land that is so extraordinary, is it newly-formed? Is it in ruins? How is it populated? The inhabitants appear tall and well proportioned. A fine field for conjectures.'(3) 'Who on earth went and placed them [the islanders] on a small sandbank like that one, and as far away from the continent as they are? And surely not many ships have passed by here, because since Quiros, who in 1603 came this way, we are the first for 165 years to come here.'(4)

Of the six islands listed by Bougainville as having been discovered on 22 and 23 March 1768, only Hao can be identified without argument: the description given by the French leaves no doubt on this point. The identification of the Quatre Facardius

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(1) Bougainville, Journal, 23-24 March 1768. 'This land looks like a harp, the middle of which would be in the water.' See also Bougainville, Voyage , p.181, in which he states that the island presents the appearance of an extended horseshoe.'
(2) Caro, Journal. 23-24 March 1768.
(3) Bougainville, Journal, 23-24 March 1768.
(4) Caro, Journal, 22-23 March 1768. Notice the reference to a continent, the 'southern continent' ever present in the early explorers' minds. Caro was not to know that the islanders led a fairly nomadic existence, going from one atoll to another.

and of the Ile des Lanciers, however, was not so easy, particularly in view of Bougainville's reluctance to give the positions of his discoveries - an omission about which Cook was later to complain. (1) It is therefore necessary to have recourse to the logs. Bougainville places the Quatre Facardins in 18°50' south, and Ile des Lanciers in 18°32 south, (2) While Caro confirms this by recording the Etoile's position at the time as being 18°43' south, (3) but for longitudes, it is necessary to estimate the possible error in the reckoning since the ships' departure from Cape Pillar. This can be done, with reasonable accuracy, by comparing Bougainville's stated longitude for Hao - 139°51 west of Greenwich - with the true longitude of this atoll, 140°43 west; this gives an error of 52' east. (4) In his log Bougainville estimates the longitude of the Quatre Facardins as 138°05 west of Greenwich, or - after correction 138°57' west. He does not give a longitude for Ile des Lanciers(5)

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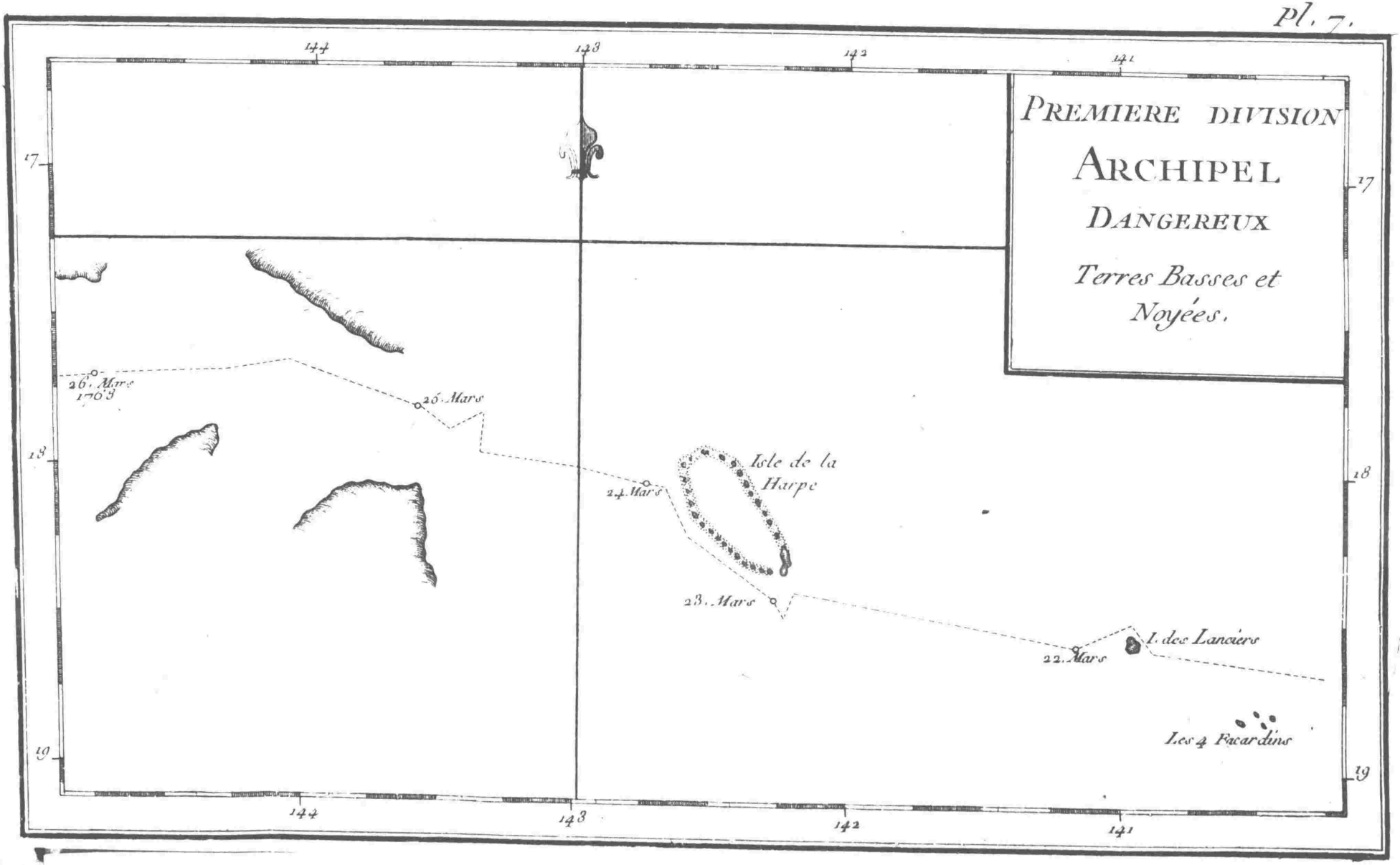
(1) Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure, (ed. J. C. Beaglehole), p. 195.

(2) Bougainville, Journal, 21-22 March 1768.

(3) Caro. Journal, 21-22 March 1768.

(4) It is interesting to note that on the evening of the 27th, Bougainville checked his longitude against an observation made by the astronomer Véron: according to it Bougainville's reckoning was 39'15" too far east. Bougainville, Journal, marginal comment to entry of 27-28 March 1768.

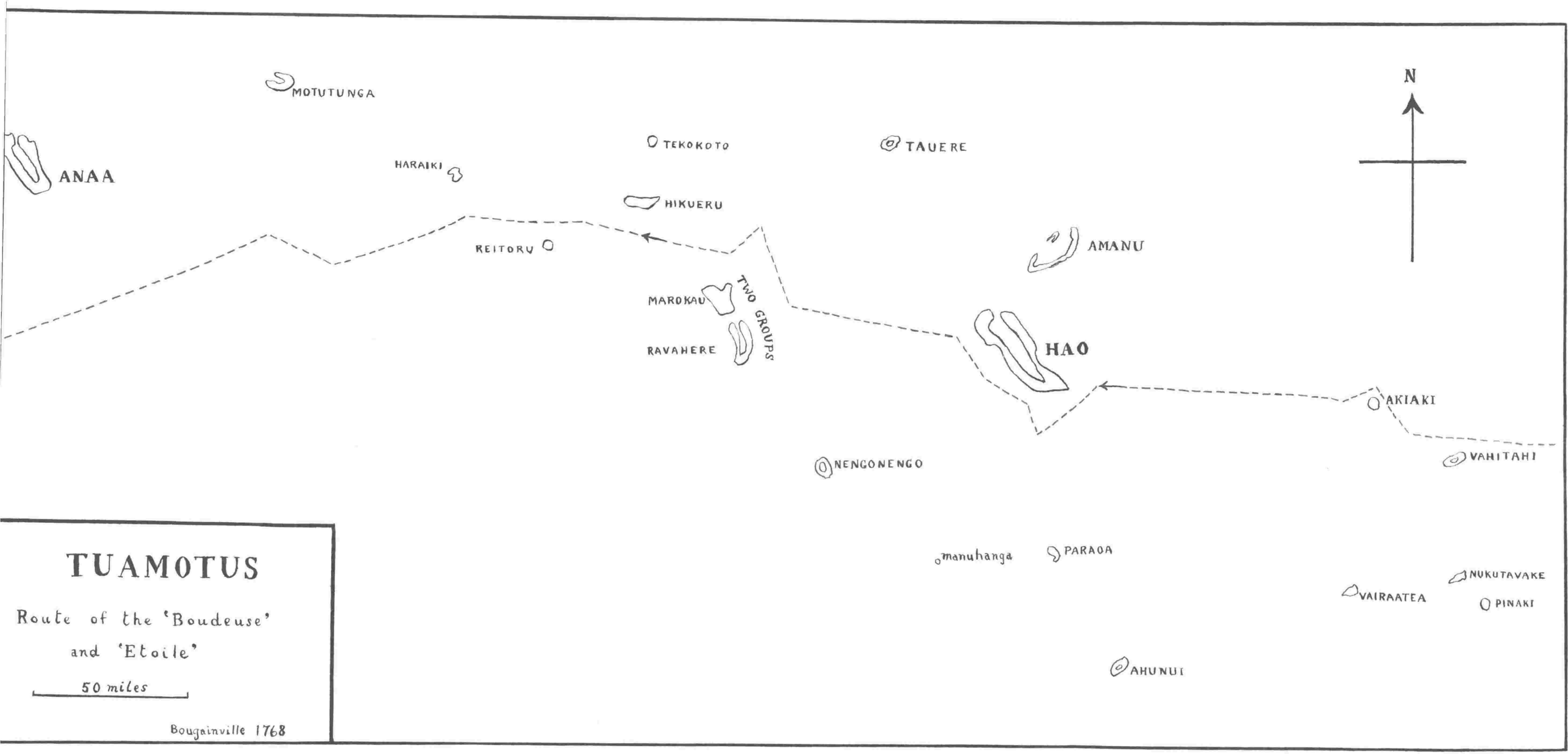
(5) 'Our position places these islands in 18°50' south and 140°25' west of Paris, the fifth in 18°32' south.' Bougainville, Journal, 21-22 March 1768. His chart shows Lanciers as approximately 30' further west than Quatre Facardins.


PREMIERE DIVISION
ARCHIPEL
DANGEREUX
Terres Basses et
Noyées.
144
143
142
141
17
18
19
26. Mars
1763
25. Mars
24. Mars
23. Mars
22. Mars
Isle de la
Harpe
I. des Lancéers
Les 4 Facardins

From these figures, we can identify the Quatre Facardins, as Vahitahi, an atoll of the western Tuamotu Group, which is in 18°43' south and 138°54' west. The Ile des Lanciers, to the north-west of the Quatre Facardins, the latitude of which Bougainville gives as 18°32' south, must therefore be Akiaki, the position of which is 18°30' south and 139°14' west. Vahitahi encloses within its lagoon a number of small islets - of which the Etoile's lookout thought he could distinguish seven to eight.

It is sometimes stated that the Quatre Facardins group represents four islands to the south and south-west of Akiaki: Vahitahi itself being one, with Nukutavake, Pinaki and Vairaatea. However, Nukutavake is thirty-three miles south of Vahitahi, while Pinaki is eight miles to the south-west of Nukutavake; as we have seen, Caro states that the ships were four leagues to north-west of the Quatre Facardins: if Nukutavake is to be included in this group, we must believe that it could have been seen from a distance of over forty miles; furthermore Pinaki - which is not more than six foot above sea level(1) - must have been visible, if this theory is to be believed, from a distance of nearly fifty miles; finally, the charts published with the account of the voyage, though admittedly not very reliable, show the Quatre Facardins as a close group of four islets, (2) each of them drawn smaller than Ile Des Lanciers, and none of them in the nineteenth

(1) Pacific Islands Pilot (1946 ed.) vol. III, p. 96.
(2) It should be noted that Bougainville refers to Lanciers as an 'île', but to Quatre Facardins as four 'islots'. Voyage p. 179.


TUAMOTUS
Route of the 'Boudeuse' and 'Etoile'
50 miles
Bougainville 1768
N
MOTUTUNGA
ANAA
HARAIKI
TEKOKOTO
TAUERE
HIKUERU
REITORU
AMANU
MAROKAU
TWO GROUPS
RAVAHERE
HAO
AKIAKI
VAHITAHI
NENGONENGO
manuhanga
PARAOA
NUKUTAVAKE
VAIRAATEA
PINAKI
AHUNUI

Nº 2

degree of latitude (the Nukutuvake-Vairaatea - Pinaki group stretches from 19°17' to 19°24' south, and across an area of 130 square miles of sea.) To attempt to include the three southern islands in the Facardius group is to throw doubt, not only on the charts, but also on the observations of Bougainville and of the astronomer Véron: suffice it to say in this connection that, when Bougainville discovered Hao on 24 August, his latitude for this island - 18°27' south - is only one minute out.

On the following day, the 24th, low-lying land was again seen to the NW and SW. 'This land appears cut into two islands and perhaps the track of land which joins them is covered by water. Bad country, dangerous archipelago.'(1) The double island is now called by Cook's name of Two Groups - it consists of Marokau to the North and Ravahere to the South. Bougainville placed these islands in 18°3'S; Marokau cuts across the 18th parallel and extends somewhat to the south of it; he reckoned its longitude as 1°17' west of Hao - a very accurate estimate; there can therefore be no doubt about that identification.

He sailed to the north of Two Groups, following a north-west course until he had passed these islands, whereupon he veered west. On the evening of the 25th, he was south of another island, of which he has left no description; however, from the position of the ships, there can be little doubt that this was Hikueru. At dawn on the following day another island

(1) Bougainville, Journal, 24-25 March 1768.

was sighted, this time to the south; at 9 a.m. another appeared to the north-west; at midday, the Boudeuse's position was 17°39′ south and 142°18′ west; (1) if we correct this longitude on the basis of a difference of 52' at Hao, we get a position of 143°10' west: this enables us to identify the southern island as Reitoru, which is in 17°50' south and 143°05' west, and which was now lying ESE by 5°S. The island seen to the north-west must therefore be Haraiki. Later in the afternoon, the Etoile reported more land to the south-west, but the weather was overcast, and those on the Boudeuse could not see it.

'We sailed west and W by ¼ SW until halfpast five, ~~W~~when the Etoile gave signal of land to the SW...We then sailed WNW; we were not able to see this land from the top of the masts. The weather was squally.' (2)

The only island that could have been sighted to the south at this time is Anaa, which in 17°21' south and 145°31' west. But this is difficult to reconcile with the position of the ships at midday on the 27th: 17°44′ south and 143°58' west (corrected by 52') for the Boudeuse, and 17°53′ south for the Etoile. Since Bougainville states that he did not begin to veer towards the north until the Etoile had reported seeing land, and since, after doing this, he was still in a position more southerly

(1) Bougainville, Journal, 25-26 March 1768. Caro gives the 'Etoile's ~~previous~~ positions in the Tuamotu's, which make it clear that she kept to the south of the Boudeuse.
(2) Bougainville. Journal, 26-27 March 1768.

than Anaa, it is reasonable to believe that what the Etoile saw was nothing more than a bank of clouds - a belief strengthened by the knowledge that, if the two ships had reached the neighbourhood of Anaa on 27 August, the error in the estimated longitude must have increased suddenly from 52' to the neighbourhood of 2°25'. Finally, on Bougainville's chart, no island is shown west of Haraiki; as we shall see in

Christian Majesty Louis XV under the Ministry of César Gabrielle de Choiseul, duc de Praslin, have discovered and examined ten islands (1) low and nearly drowned, situated between 19 and 17 degrees of southern latitude, from the 140th to the 145th degrees of longitude west of Paris (2) We have named this archipelago, the Dangerous Archipelago, and we have taken possession of it on behalf of His Majesty with the required formalities. In witness whereof we have drawn up the present Act of Possession, and have obtained the signatures of the naval officers and chief Petty officers of the two vessels under our command. Prepared on board the royal frigate La Boudeuse on 26 March 1768... ' (3)

The weather, no longer favoured the expedition: from being overcast, it turned to rain and soon to 'the most horrible weather in the world' which caused Bougainville to sail SSE,(4). Scurvy began to affect the sailors. 'The poor sailor cannot get himself dry and, since humidity is the most active agent of scurvy, we shall soon be infected with it; the storekeeper's clerk and one of my blacks are very ill with it.' (5)

(1) In reality 8: Vahitahi, (which Bougainville reckons as four), Akiaki, Hao, Two Groups (which he treats as one), Hikueru, Reitoru, and Haraiki.
(2) This wording eliminates Anaa, which is 147°51' west of Paris.
(3) Autograph Acte de Possession on parchment bearing 37 signatures, listed in Sotheby's Catalogue of the highly important papers of Louis de Bougainville F.R.S. (1729-1811), p. 24
(4) Bougainville, Journal 30-31 March 1768.
(5) Ibid., 31 March - 1 April 1768.

In an attempt to halt the ravages of the disease, the sailors were given a kind of lemonade, but it could only act as a palliative. It was evident that, unless an island could supply them with refreshments, scurvy would create havoc among the crew.

Their troubles were nearing an end, however, for on 2 April a high peak was seen NNE, and another high island WNW. The high mountain Bougainville named Le Boudoir (1) with the alternative name of Boudeuse Peak; it was Mehetia Island, 1427 feet high, some sixty miles off Tahiti, which Wallis had already sighted in 1767 and called Osnaburg Island.(2) Bougainville estimated its position as 17°51' south and 147°50' west, a not inaccurate estimate.(3)

For the rest of the day, the sea was dead calm, and it was not until 6 p.m. that a breeze came up; even then it was not very favourable and he spent all night on various tacks.(4)

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(1) Le Boudoir could be translated with justice as the 'bower', being an isolated garden island, but, in view of the name of his ship (for 'Boudeuse' as well as 'the surly one' also means a kind of settee) it is probable that Bougainville meant it to refer to a small sitting-room. There may have been an unconscious association in his mind with the word 'bougeoir' a candleholder, from the shape of the peak.

(2) 'The whole one continuous Mountain which may easily be seen fifteen or sixteen Leagues distance.' G.Robertson, in The Discovery of Tahiti, (ed.H.Carrington), p.131.

(3) Journal, 1-2 April 1768. The correct position of Mehetia is 17°54' south and 148°02' west. Bougainville's reckoning of this longitude is, therefore, rather more accurate than at Hao.

(4) e.g., SW¼W,W,W¼NW,N,ESE,WSW. Caro, Journal, 2-3 April 1768.

On the 4th however, he had approached sufficiently close to the western land to distinguish something like a canal that appeared to cut it into two islands, but as they came closer he 'recognised that it was only a great bay with low land inside it.' (1)

Then he sailed along the eastern coast of Tahiti - for such it was - until he reached the northernmost point. 'On the morning of the 6th we had reached the northern extremity of the island.' (2) Behind this lay Matavai Bay, where the Englishman Samuel Wallis had brought the Dolphin to anchor less than a year before, and where Cook was to bring the Endeavour in 1769, but the coast was defended by a long line of breakers with no apparent opening, and nothing led the French to suspect that a good anchorage was so near to them. They turned back towards the great bay; the boats were lowered to seek a safe opening through the reef; they failed to find one in the afternoon of the 5th, but succeeded the following morning;(3) the Boudeuse anchored in what is known as Hitiaa Lagoon,. It was to prove a 'detestable anchorage' that cost them a total of six anchors.(4)

Meanwhile, the island appeared attractive. The natives were friendly and, even while the French had been sailing slowly along the coast, brisk trading had been carried out with upwards of a hundred canoes. Indeed, the very friendliness of the islanders gave rise to unusual difficulties

(1) Bougainville, Journal 3-4 April 1768.
(2) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p.188.
(3) Caro, Journal 5-6 April 1768. This opening in the reef is today called 'La Passe de la Boudeuse,'and the lagoon is also known as Port de Bougaiville. Pacific Islands Pilot, vol. III, p. 151.
(4) Bougainville, Journal, 15 April 1768.

when the French were endeavouring to drop the anchor.

'I ask: how could one keep at work, in the midst of such a spectacle, four hundred Frenchmen, young sailors who, for six months had not seen a woman? In spite of all our precautions, one young woman came aboard onto the poop, and stood by one of the hatches above the capstan. This hatch was opened to give some air to those who were working. The young girl negligently allowed her loincloth to fall to the ground, and appeared to all eyes such as Venus showed herself to the Phrygian shepherd. She had the Goddess's celestial form. Sailors and soldiers hurried to get to the hatchway, and never was capstan heaved with such speed.'(1)

On that day, the legend of Tahiti was born. Bougainville, however, remained cautious and, as desirous of preserving discipline as he was to prevent his men from falling into a possible ambush, he issued an order that no one was yet to set foot on land. All obeyed except one, the cook, who, although treated with what could be considered indignity, was not mishandled. The picture of Tahiti as a South Sea paradise was to remain unimpaired for many weeks and, in some respects, for ever. Indeed, to Vivès, the Tahitians appeared so charming that he wondered how their civilisation could have developed without the influence of Europe.(2)

Although he was later to draw up a document taking possession of the island on behalf of France, Bougainville never claimed

(1) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p. 190.
(2) Vivès, Journal, p. 101.

that he was the discoverer of Tahiti. True, the island did not appear on any chart, but there were clear indications of a prior visit by Europeans. A Tahitian had come on board the Etoile even before the French had found an anchorage; he had visited the ship, and stayed several nights. It was he who gave the first indication that they were not the first discoverers of Tahiti.

'I believe that he knew the guns, [for] when he saw them in the great chamber he began to say 'poux poux', and he made a gesture to show that it caused death. ' (1)

Apart from considerable 'souveniring' by the Tahitians, there was little to mar the friendly relations. Visits were exchanged, and the islanders were entertained to a concert on bass, flute and violin, followed by a fireworks display. At first, there had been some objections to Bougainville's plan to erect a sick camp on land, but by making clear his intention to remain only for a total of eighteen days - and then agreeing, at the request of the natives, to reduce this to nine days - he overcame it. There were thirty-four cases of scurvy, twenty of them on the Etoile. (2)

The problem of thefts is a recurrent one in Pacific exploration. It caused much bloodshed and, to many navigators, it was simply another proof of the amorality of primitive people. Bougainville, who suffered as much from this exasperating

(1) Caro, Journal, 4-5 April 1768.
(2) Ibid., 8-9 April 1768.

trait as any other, takes a more sensible and understanding attitude than most:

'No doubt curiosity towards new objects awoke in them violent desires - and anyhow there are rascals everywhere.'(1)

It is a temptation that even Europeans would find hard to resist. To the islanders, the visitors were as strange as travellers from outer space, the goods on board were curiosities, the iron articles unusual treasures. But Bougainville, while he understood better than most explorers the temptations to which the natives were exposed, did not fail, for all that, to take all possible precautions to avoid incidents and to prevent thieving.

Incidents became less easy to avoid as days went by. Some days were good, such as the 10th when 'the Chief offered me one of his women,(2) young and fairly pretty; the whole assembly sang the marriage hymn. What a country! What a people!' (3) Yet, later that day, a Tahitian was found killed. 'It must be a cowardly murder,' wrote Bougainville, who endeavoured

(1) Bougainville, 'Voyage de la Boudeuse,' p.197. This did not prevent him from giving way to impatience when provocation became too great. 'I fear that we shall have to kill some in the end, as an example,' he confided in his Journal on 9 April 1768. Caro wrote that the Tahitian who was a guest on the Etoile was 'as great a scoundrel as the others', - Journal, 9-10 April 1768.

(2) Bougainville writes 'femmes', which could mean 'wives' - in his opinion, at least, for monogamy was the rule.

(3) Bougainville, Journal, 10 April 1768. He does not say whether the offer was accepted.

to trace the culprit.(1) On the 12th, three islanders were bayonetted by some soldiers from the Boudeuse; this time, it was possible to arrest four suspects.(2) The danger, as Bougainville knew, was that the Tahitians might seek to revenge their dead by making a sudden attack on the ships. The weather was bad, and the Boudeuse, which had dragged her anchors, had struck the Etoile, inflicting, fortunately, only minor damage. Bougainville did not want to incur the hostility of the natives in addition to these other troubles; he sought to placate them by punishing the soldiers. 'M. de Bougainville wanted to make them draw lots among the soldiers in order to hang one, but as it was nearly dark, M. de Bougainville had them taken on board and put in irons.' (3)

In the night, the Boudeuse's cables gave more trouble. The anchorage was indeeed detestable; in a gale one of the ships might easily drift onto the reef or ashore. It was more than ever important to maintain friendly relations. In the morning, the Prince of Nassau was despatched on a diplomatic mission; his noble manners, his courtier's tact restored friendly relations. ~~Their~~ Confidence, however, was weakened: the more prudent among the natives, remembering the troubles with Wallis the year before, were fleeing into the hills, taking their belongings with them.(4)

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(1) Ibid., 11 April 1768.
(2) The Culprits were apprehended by the Prince of Nassau; see C.F.P. Fesche, La Nouvelle Cythère, (ed. J. Dorsenne), pp. 24-5.
(3) Caro, Journal, 12-13 April 1768.
(4) Ibid.

The stay was nearing its end. Bougainville had promised to leave within nine days, and it was wise to depart as soon as possible from this unsafe harbour. As a parting gesture, a garden was prepared in which wheat, maize, beans, peas, lentils and other vegetables were sown.(1) Bougainville also gave turkeys and geese in the hope that these, like the plants, might multiply and help to supplement the Tahitian diet.

The Act of Possession was buried 'at thirteen paces from the shore and one hundred and eight paces from the river where we obtained our water'(2) The copy given by Bougainville reads as follows (3) 'The year 1768 the 12 April we, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, colonel in the infantry, captain of the king's ships, commanding the frigates the Boudeuse and the Etoile, by order of His Most Christian Majesty Louis XV, under the ministry of M. de Choiseul, Duc de Praslin, we have taken possession of an archipelago, stretching from the 18th to the 16th degrees of longitude west of the Paris meridian, in proof of which, in one of the islands of this archipelago, situated in 17°34' of southern latitude and approximately 151° of longitude west(4) which we have named New Cythera, (5) we have left the present

(1) Bougainville, Journal, 14 April 1768.
(2) St. Germain, quoted in de la Roncière, Routier Inédit, p. 233.
(3) The version given by St. Germain differs in minor points, notably by omitting the reference to an archipelago but adding that the island is situated in 'the Western Sea.' However, St. Germain quotes in full the minuted document claiming the island for France, which is far more detailed.
(4) The anchorage at Hitiaa is on 17°35' south, and 151°37' west of Paris, equivalent to 149°17' west of Greenwich.
(5) This was considered appropriate in view of the Tahitian attitude towards love. Cythera is a Greek island where Aphrodite is reputed to have risen from the waves; an important temple dedicated to the goddess had been built on the island in classical days. Sexual freedom in Tahiti strongly impressed the French, some of whom sought to praise it as a social virture, as we shall see.

inscription corresponding to the Act of Possession signed by our officers and chief officers, whose names are appended, in a bottle' (1).

Even as they left, danger threatened them. For no sooner had they got half a league out than the breeze died down, and the Boudeuse was left to drift back towards the reef; half an hour elapsed before a light wind came to free them from the current. (2)

Shortly before the departure, Ereti, the local chief who had befriended them, came aboard with another Tahitian who, so it later proved, was his brother and also the man who had spent several days on board the Etoile. Ereti explained that his brother, Aoutourou (3) wished to sail with the French to visit their country and to return later to Tahiti. They were glad to encourage him to do so, since their stay in these islands was necessarily a short one; he would be helpful as an interpreter and guide if they came across other islands inhabited by people of his race. And he would be invaluable as a source of information on the customs, language and resources of his island. Ahutoru, who later gave rise to Marion du Fresne's ill-fated expedition, enabled Bougainville to correct some of his opinions about the island (4). The Frenchman had nothing

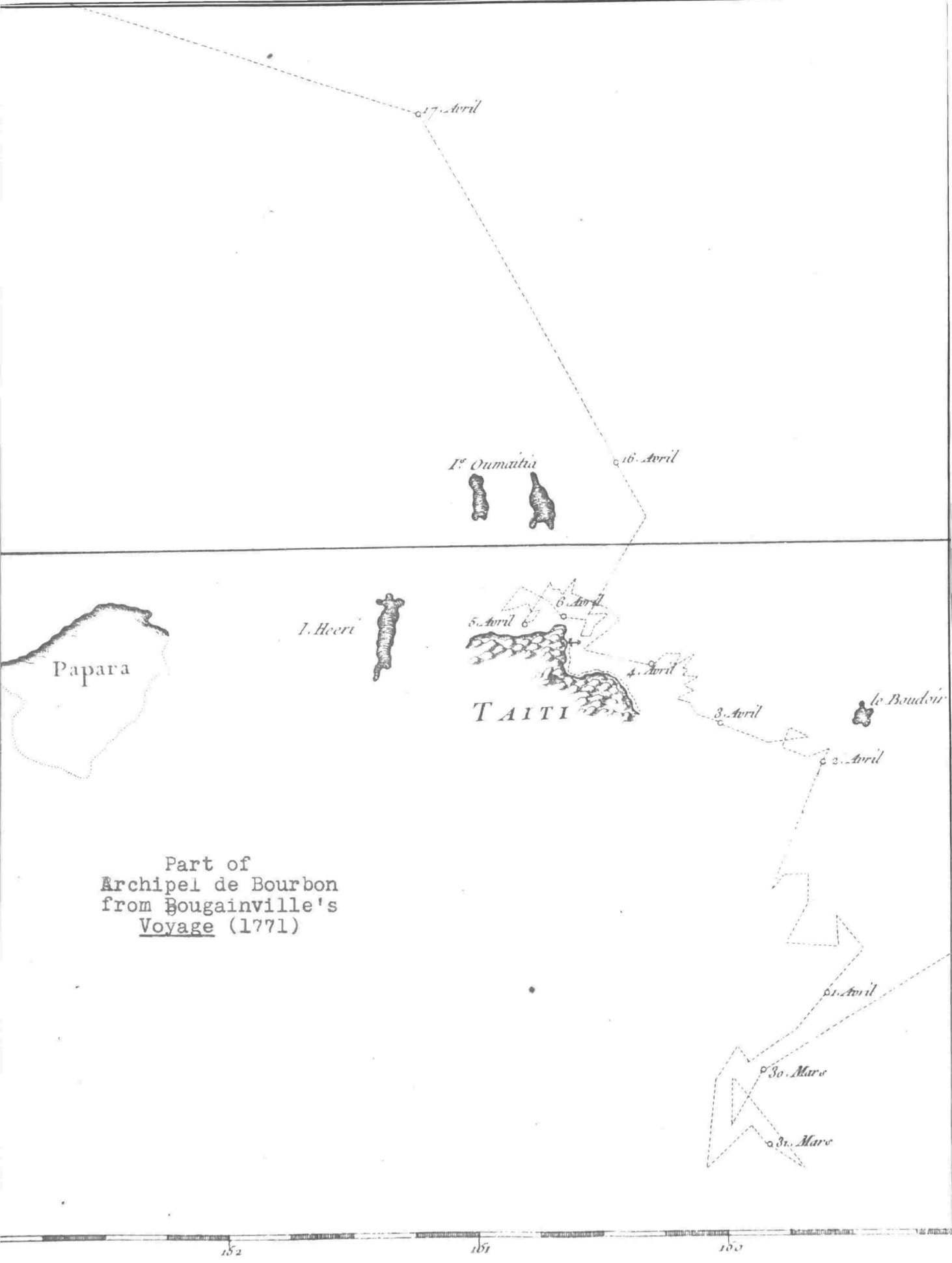
(1) Bougainville, Journal, 14 April 1768.
(2) Ibid.,15 April 1768; Caro, Journal, 14-15 April 1768.
(3) The French phonetic rendition of his name which was probably Ahu-toru. See Teuira Henry, Ancient Tahiti, p.17. At first Bougainville called him 'Louis de Cythère', Caro, Journal, 15-16 April 1768.
(4) It was from him that Bougainville learned that an English ship had already discovered Tahiti.Bougainville, Voyage, p.232 Strangely enough, when Cook mentioned Ahutoru to Ereti, the chief showed no interest whatsoever. See Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure (ed.J.C.Beaglehole), p.205

but praise for the place, its climate, the apparently easy life of the natives and what he saw and understood of their institutions. Until Ahu-toru had learned enough French to show him the reverse of the medal, he believed that here was proof conclusive of the theory, so popular in France at the time, that Man in his natural state was good, and that only civilisation corrupted him. It was an opinion that he revised as the enchanted island receded into the distance, but the Parisian philosophers later welcomed the smiling Tahitian, whose supposed way of life dovetailed so neatly into their theories.

But a less rosy view was taken by St. Germain who, as a newly-married man separated from his wife, had presumably been unimpressed by the generous attitude of the Tahitian women. 'This poor wretch' he wrote of Ahu-toru, 'will long repent the foolish thing he has done, because I consider his return to his homeland as impossible; he will be happy if the sorrow of remaining a long time at sea does not deprive him of the temporary pleasure that will be his when he sees Paris: his main motive is the desire that he has of marrying for a time some white women' [sic]. (1)

Ahu-toru was most anxious to guide his new friends to neighbouring islands in the Society group, as it was to be called, and he impressed the French with his knowledge of astral navigation. (2) Rather logically, he stressed the attractions of the island women in some of the places where he hoped the French could be persuaded to land: having seen the interest

(1) Routier Inédit, p. 234. (2) 'The Indian showed us the Great Bear, the Twins, and the other stars. He showed our helmsmen that by steering by Orion, they would find within three days a very fine nation... Ibid., p. 235.



Part of
Archipel de Bourbon
from Bougainville's
Voyage (1771)

displayed by them towards the opposite sex in Tahiti, he naturally concluded that this was one of the main purposes of the expedition. But Bougainville felt that the supplies they had on board did not allow a leisurely voyage among the islands. He therefore neglected Ahu-toru's insistent advice, and thus failed to locate the large Leeward Island group north-west of Tahiti, leaving this rich crop to be harvested by Cook in the following year. Perhaps Bougainville did not believe that Ahu-toru's islands were anything more than ~~the~~ atolls similar to those he had seen in the Tuamotus, for, soon after the departure from Hitiaa, a group of three small islands came into sight which then merged into one low atoll.

The ships had sailed north-north-east for approximately thirty miles, and then veered north-north-west. On 16 April, at 10 a.m., 'we saw land to leeward having the appearance of three islands; one could still see the extremity of Tahiti. At midday, we saw perfectly that what we had taken for three islands was only one ... this island was of moderate height.(1) This would indicate that the French were in sight of Tetiaroa atoll, to the north of Tahiti; Bougainville shows on his chart two islands to the north of Tahiti between 16°50' and 17°05' south - and the latitude of Tetiaroa is 17°03' south.(2) Why there should be now/two islands named Oumaitia where he reports having seen first three and then one is not clear - unless this also represents some further land which he suspected lay behind. The

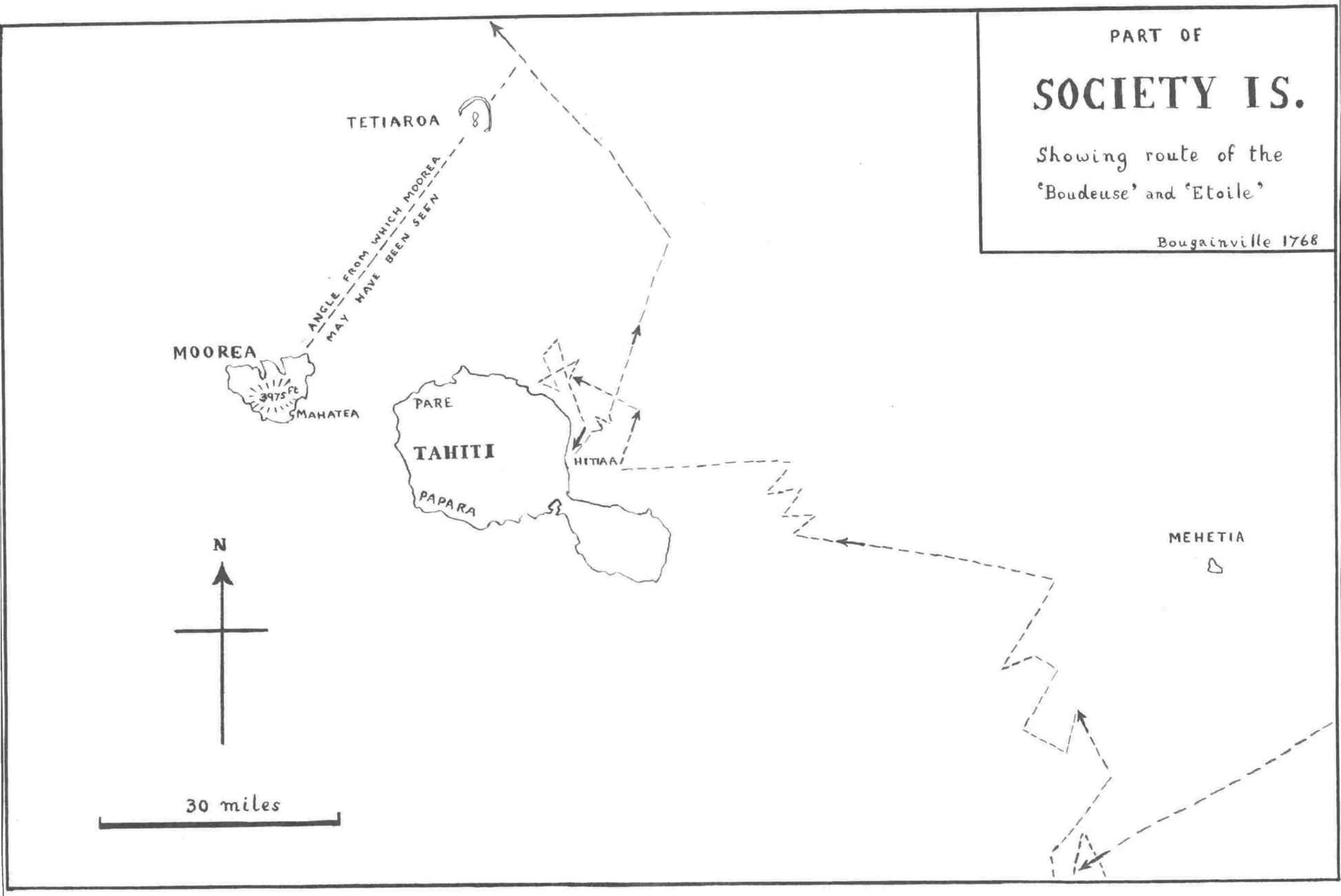
(1) Bougainville's Voyage, p. 233. A great deal hinges on the last sentence: 'une hauteur médiocre,' which has a pejorative under-tone.

(2) Bougainville's latitudes, when given, are fairly accurate.

chart, however, is more complicated, because it shows two more islands, Heeri and Papara, to the west of Tahiti; approximately where Moorea and Tubuai Manu lie.

Little sense can be made out of the chart if it is taken too strictly in conjunction with the printed text or the log, for it represents both what Bougainville saw and what he tried to understand from Ahu-toru. Thus it appears reasonable to believe that he saw Tetiaroa, as he must have sailed quite close to it: he accordingly set this down on the chart, and asked Ahutoru to name it. The Tahitian believed the Frenchman to be referring to the farther land which could be seen 'par dessus cette nouvelle terre', and he named it Oumaitia. If we presume that Bougainville was now to the north-east of Tetiaroa - a reasonable hypothesis for the afternoon of the 16 April - the high peak of Moorea would be in a line with the lowland of Tetiaroa. Ahutoru was possibly referring to a village on the south-west coast of Moorea, Mahatea, where he may have been urging Bougainville to go.

Bougainville then asked for the names of other islands. Ahutoru gave two names - Papara, a district of Tahiti itself, which would also be to the south-west of the Boudeuse, and Heeri, which could be Mt. Ohiri on Tahaa, whose 1936 feet-high peak Ahutoru thought he could distinguish on the horizon. But either now or later, Ahutoru gave a further list of names to Bougainville who, since there was nothing on the horizon to


PART OF
SOCIETY IS.
Showing route of the
'Boudeuse' and 'Etoile'
Bougainville 1768
TETIAROA
ANGLE FROM WHICH MOOREA
MAY HAVE BEEN SEEN
MOOREA
3975 ft
MAHATEA
PARE
TAHITI
PAPARA
HITIAA
MEHETIA
N
30 miles

Nº 3

which they could be assigned, did not include them on his rough chart.

'Aoutourou has spoken to me of several islands, some allied with Tahiti, others always at war with her. The friendly islands are: Aimeo, Maoroua, Aca, Oumaitia, Tapoua Massou; the enemy ones are: Papara, Aitea, Otaa, Toumaraa, Oopoa. These islands are as large as Tahiti, the island of Paré, where pearls abound, is sometimes allied, sometimes at war with Tahiti.' (1)

The names given can serve to illustrate the confusion which existed in the Frenchman's mind. Maoroua is Moorea, (although Maupiti is sometimes known as Maurua),(2), Tapoua Massou is Tubuai Manu, Aiatea is Raiatea and Otaa is Tahau; Aimeo is a former name for Moorea,(3) and Oumaitia we have already seen, may be part of the same island; Papara and Paré are districts of Tahiti, Toumaraa is Tumaraa, and Oopoa is Opoa, both being districts of Raiatea; Acaa remains unidentifiable. All these are listed as friendly or unfriendly 'islands' close to Tahiti.

The conclusion would appear to be that the French discovered Tetiaroa, and saw indistinctly Moorea. That they saw anything of either Huahine, Tubuai Manu or Tahaa seems hard to credit. The two ships sailed on, eager only to avoid meeting further reef-fringed atolls. By 18 April, they had sailed beyond the fifteenth parallel, and the entire Society group lay far to the south.

Land was not seen again until 3 May at dawn. At 6.30., a

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(1) Bougainville, Voyage, p.228.
(2) P.H.Buck, Explorers of the Pacific, p. ~~120~~ 79.
(3) Teuira Henry, Ancient Tahiti; p.89.

high island appeared to the north-west (1). They sailed towards it, and it was seen that there were three islands altogether; canoes came out to them, but Ahutoru could not understand the language of the natives who manned them. The people were not related to the Tahitians, and lacked the charm of New Cythera, for 'a woman who has come out in one of the canoes is hideous.' (2) The French had reached the Samoan group to which, on account of the numbers of canoes they saw there, they gave the name of Navigators' Islands. (3)

These first three islands form the Manua group - Tua, and the two smaller islands of Olosega and Ofu. Tua is cone-shaped, and rises to 2,000 ft. On the morning of the 5th, the French sighted a long and high island to the northwest- Tutuila - and, as shown by Bougainville's charts, they had a distant view of the southern coast of Upolu in the evening. Nothing more was seen on the sixth, the weather was becoming overcast, and the winds were capricious. 'How much patience, my God, does this navigation require!' exclaimed Bougainville, (4) while Caro records the weather as 'très pitoyable'(5)

(1) Bougainville, Journal, ~~Ibid.~~, 2-3 May 1768.
(2) Ibid., 4-5 May
(3) On the Etoile, the islands were named 'The Three Cousins,' Vivès, Journal, p.117
(4) Ibid., 9-10 May 1768. Bougainville, in fact had little patience according to a note by his son Hyacinthe, in B.N., N.A.F. 9407-57.
(5) Caro, Journal, 9-10 May 1768.

The absence of charts, the possibility of a sudden reef appearing ahead, the steadily worsening condition of the supplies, all these were beginning to fray their morale

'For my part, I believe privately that we are making here a voyage that is very thorny, and one in which we are running great risks, in addition to the length of a passage such as we are making, the sufferings and fatigues that we have to endure which do not cease to be very great and hard, for it must be borne in mind that in ten days we have been at sea for six months since leaving Montevideo, and those who come after us, if ever any do come, will still have great risks to run. (1)'

They still had many islands before them. After sailing westwards, they saw, on the 11th at dawn, 'a fairly high land which appears to cut into two islands, to the WSW, distance of approximately eight leagues.' At first Bougainville called this La Solitaire (2) then changed it to l'Enfant Perdu. They were in fact Hoorn Islands, Futuna and Alofi, which are easy to mistake from a distance for a single twin-peaked island. The position of the Boudeuse at the time was 14°15' south by 178°44' west of Paris. This, corrected by a lunar observations of Véron's on the previous day, gives a truer position of 14°15' by 180°49'. Since Futuna and Alofi lie in 14°15' south and 180°25' west of Paris, Véron's work is shown to be remarkably accurate for the time.

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(1) Caro, Journal, 4-5 May 1768.
(2) Bougainville, Journal, 10-11 May 1768.

The passage of the French expedition in these parts is commemorated in the name of the Alofi peak, which is now known as Mt. Bougainville.

Ten more days were to pass, on a course that took them WSW then W, before land was again sighted - this time the archipelago of the New Hebrides. Meanwhile the weather was bad, and the health of the officers and crew was once more causing concern. 'Frightful weather. We have now been at sea six months. We have refreshments left only for the sick. Firewood is going to run out. Several officers have the mouth heated and the gums affected by scurvy. For my part, I am no longer master of my impatience.' (1)

There was not only scurvy on board, but a disease which, to the sailors, could only be what was called 'the venereal distemper."

'We have begun to notice that some sailors, two in number, have caught an illness, it is believed at the island of Cythera; it has manifested itself by chancres,' wrote St. Germain on the 16th. (2)

On the following day, he reports that six soldiers are suffering from the same trouble. On the 22nd, he becomes more specific. 'Several cases of venereal disease have occurred on the storeship l'Etoile and several more on our ship. I must say, in praise of the continence or good fortune of the officers, that none has been affected in this way.'(3)

(1) Bougainville, Journal, 13-14 May 1768. Two days later, he commented: 'this is not living, it is dying a thousand deaths.'
(2) De la Roncière, 'Routier Inédit,' p. 236.
(3) Ibid., p. 236.

Vivès gives the eventual number of the sick as being approximately twenty on the Boudeuse and twelve on the Etoile.(1) Ahu-toru was among the sufferers, but 'it appears that in his country, they worry little about this disease'.(2) The question of whether the disease was endemic in the islands and, if it was not, of which navigator was responsible for its introduction, is of some importance, for it has led to a controversy between the French and the English, which has not yet died down.(3)

The easiest answer would be to state that the first ship-load of sailors and marines to enjoy the favours of the island women was responsible for introducing at the same time a disease with which seamen especially are familiar. This would give the dubious honour to the men of Wallis's Dolphin. Did not the Tahitians call it 'Apa no peritane' - the British illness? However, although twenty men of the Dolphin's crew were affected when the ship sailed from Plymouth, all, with one possible exception, were declared cured by the surgeon long before Tahiti was reached; nor were any cases reported after the call there. This would place the onus squarely on Bougainville, who did not deny that his men had suffered from it at some time.(4) Either

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(1) Vivès, Journal, p.112; de la Ronciere, 'Routier Inédit,' p.236.
(2) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p.242.
(3) The French case is put by de la Roncière in 'Routier Inédit,' pp.235-6; the British case is summarised by H.Carrington, in The Discovery of Tahiti, pp. 284-7, while a suggestion that would tend to exculpate both sides was put forward by Sir Joseph Carruthers in Captain James Cook R.N. One hundred and fifty years after, pp.155-70, as well as by J.C.Beaglehole in The Exploration of the Pacific, p.246, and more recently by S.M. Lambert in A Doctor in Paradise, pp.30-2. The question has been most recently discussed, from the French point of view, at a meeting of the Société Française d'Histoire de Médecine, but no new evidence was adduced. see Journal de la Société des Océanistes, vol.I, no.I, Dec.1945, p.137. (4) 'I had taken all sible precautions so that we should not transmit [it] to them.' Bougainville, vage de la Boudeuse, (1st ed.1771), p.215.

way, Cook's men were absolved.

Bougainville refuted the claim that the French had brought the disease to Tahiti: in his first edition, he contented himself with saying: 'I do not know whether the Tahitians owe to the English, as well as the discovery of iron, the introduction of the venereal diseases which we found established there.' (1) But, in his second edition, published in 1772, he replies to Cook's accusations saying: 'it is with as little justification that they accuse us of having brought to the unfortunate Tahitians the illness that we could suspect more justly was communicated to them by M. Wallas's [sic] crew. (2)

Vivès, the surgeon, sprang to the defence with more energy. 'As to the seeds of this illness, it is certain that they were not brought by the French into this country, where it seems to have been current for a long time; I do not say this from hearsay: But I have seen two women who gave me sufficient proof. I have, in addition, the report of my second surgeon; furthermore [that] of Boutaveris (3), a native whom we had on board, who, on the third day that he arrived, gave us his personal news, by which he made us understand that they were subject to it in his country, but that their doctors cured it by means of plants.' (4) Similarly, La Giraudais had

(1) Ibid, p. 232. Italics mine.
(2) Bougainville, Voyage (1772 ed.), vol. II, pp. II5-6. The other accusation was of having flown a Spanish flag at Tahiti.
(3) Ahu-toru, who had exchanged names with Bougainville, and who was later known by this Tahitian approximation of the Frenchman's name.
(4) Vivès, Journal p. 111-2; de la Roncière, 'Routier Inédit,' p. 236.

written in his Journal, upon his arrival at Tahiti: 'the venereal disease is very common there.' (1)

This does not necessarily prove that venereal disease was endemic in Tahiti. 'For a long time' does not always mean the same to natives as it does to us; it may well refer to a period of twelve months. Vivès could thus have been misled by Ahu-toru, who also told Bougainville that 'in his country, they worry little about this disease.' The later - and far more serious - manifestations of syphilis would not have declared themselves in the first twelve months, and the Tahitians would not have found too much to worry about at first. If Ahu-toru and Vivès are to be trusted, the disease existed on the island in 1768 - and the men of the Dolphin should bear the blame.

Yet, the disease might have been known to the Tahitians long before the arrival of the first Europeans. Although some anthropologists are quite adamant that it was unknown in Polynesia until then,(2) others point out that the Spanish could have brought it from America, where it is believed to have originated, to the Marquesas and the Tuamotus in the 16th and 17th centuries, whence normal intercourse between the islands could have brought it to Tahiti;(3) others again suggest evidence of voyages from America to Polynesia before the New World was discovered.(4) It is a question that could probably only be settled by an examination of pre-European Tahitian

(1) La Girandais, Journal, 6 April 1768.
(2) Bengt Danielsson, Love in the South Seas, p. 102.
(3) H. Jacquier, 'Le Mirage et l'Exotisme Tahitiens dans la Litterature,' in Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Océaniennes, Vol. VII, No. 2, p. 64.
(4) J. Hornell, 'Was there pre-Columbian contact between the people of Oceania and America??, in Journal of the Polynesian Society, 1945, p. 167-91. See also Thor Heyerdahl's American Indians in the Pacific.

skeletons, and one which still leaves us with that damning appelation 'Apa no peritane.'

It is at this stage that the suggestion that Ahu-toru was referring to yaws, and not syphilis, must be considered. Yaws is a tropical disease, endemic in the Pacific, caused by a virus very similar to the causative organism of syphilis, (1) and the symptoms, which include ulcers, are very similar in both cases. (2) This, therefore, reconciles the statements of Ahu-toru and Vivès with those of Wallis.

But this theory brings us back very soon where we were on the question of venereal disease, because it does not explain why Bougainville and Cook's men were infected with 'yaws', while Wallis's got off scot-free. Nor does it solve the problem of the eventual introduction of venereal disease. Yaws, to some extent, acts as an immunising agent against syphilis. It is significant that, today, Pacific islands where yaws remains a problem are free from syphilis - this is the case in Samoa, the Solomons and the Gilbert and Ellice group. (3) Conversely, where yaws ~~are~~ is being eradicated, such as in Tahiti, syphilis is on the increase.

We cannot attach too much importance to the silence of Wallis's surgeon. When he assured Wallis that 'no man on board

(1) The micro-organisism in yaws is Spirochaeta pallidula; in syphilis, it is called Spirochaeta pallida. There is also the possibility of yaws being a mutation of syphilis.
(2) Bougainville stated that 'They [the illnesses] showed all the symptons known in Europe'. Voyage de la Boudeuse, (1772), vol. II.
(3) South Pacific Commission Technical Information Circular No. 2, Project H. 9, Venereal Diseases, August 1952, p. 1.

was affected with any sort of disorder, that they could communicate to the Natives of this beautiful island', (1). he was speaking during a discussion on whether to curtail the Liberty men's shore leave, something to which he objected as being likely to harm the sick men's recovery. Furthermore, it should be remembered that a venereal infection rendered the sailor liable to loss of pay - a practice which did not encourage him to report to the surgeon.

It could be, therefore, that the twenty men on the Dolphin, who had been suffering from the disease,(2), transmitted some of the germs to a small number of yaws-free women. The women, being themselves uncontaminated, would not cause a serious recurrence of the disease among the sailors. A year later, however, the disease would have become established in the island and called the 'British disease'. Bougainville's sailors, and Cook's after him, would have had intercourse with women who were no longer free from the disease, and they would have suffered correspondingly greater ill-effects. This could explain why the men of the Endeavour in 1769 would have been more affected than the men of the Boudeuse and of the Etoile in 1768, (3) just as the men of the Boudeuse were more affected than those of the Dolphin.

While all these discomforts were being endured, the two ships were continuing their westward progress. Eleven days after sailing from Hoorn Islands, that is, on 22 May 1768, land appeared ahead. '... Two islands, with a pass between the

(1) Robertson, The Discovery of Tahiti, (ed. Carrington), p. 186.
(2) In the eighteenth century, the disease could be treated, but a definitive cure was rare.
(3) Cook's men, it is true, stayed far longer in Tahiti, but Bougainville's sailors enjoyed an impressive hospitality during their brief stay.

two, some two leagues in width; what we saw stretched from the north-west by 5 degrees west to south by 4 degrees east. We sailed close to the wind, but, not being able to reach the strait between the two islands, I bore away along the coast of the northernmost island to pass to leeward, and I named this island Aurora and the southernmost Pentecost from which it is separated by a strait.' (1)

The two ships were in sight of the New Hebrides, but the name that Bougainville gave to the island group was 'The Great Cyclades' - again a derivation from the Greek. Aurora Island is Maewo, while Pentecost, although still known by that name today, is also known by its native name, Raga. The strait between them is Patterson Passage. As Bougainville reached the north-east cape of Maewo, he saw far to the north a single peak, much like Mehetia; this, which was the small island of Mera Lava in the Banks group, he called the Pic de l'Etoile, just as Mehetia had been called the Pic de la Boudeuse. Rounding the northern point of Maewo, the two ships saw another island to the southwest and more land stretching from west by south-west to north-west. It was - there seemed little doubt about it - the land which Quiros had discovered in 1606, and to which he had given the name of Austrialia del Espiritu Santo.

'We believe, following Quiros' mémoire, that this land [is the one] he found in this region, and which [he] marks as being that of the Holy Ghost, and where he entered by a kind

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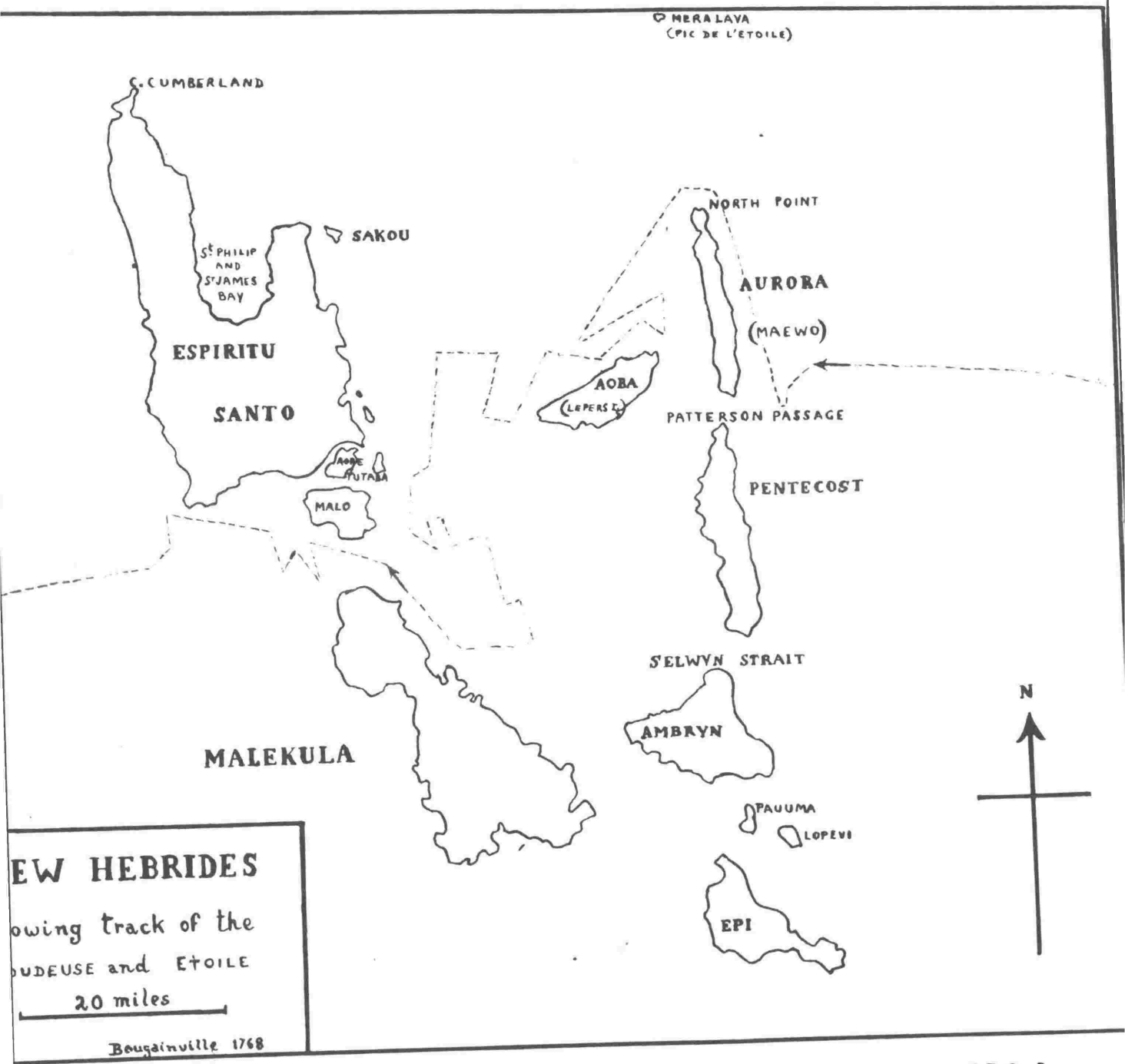
(1) Bougainville, Journal, 21-22 May 1768. The 22 May 1768 was Whitsunday, the Feast of the Pentecost.


MERA LAVA
(PIC DE L'ETOILE)
C. CUMBERLAND
SAKOU
St PHILIP AND St JAMES BAY
ESPIRITU SANTO
AOBE
TUTABA
MALO
NORTH POINT
AURORA
(MAEWO)
AOBA
(LEPERS I.)
PATTERSON PASSAGE
PENTECOST
SELWYN STRAIT
AMBRYN
MALEKULA
PAUUMA
LOPEVI
EPI
N
EW HEBRIDES
owing track of the
UDEUSE and ETOILE
20 miles
Bougainville 1768

No 4

of gulf between two headlands, after having covered twelve to fifteen leagues and found himself in a very good harbour, and in a fine bay where he anchored in six fathoms, sandy bottom, where he stayed for over a month'. (1)

The French unfortunately missed Quiros' anchorage in St. Philip and St. James Bay, since, instead of sailing westward towards the island of Espiritu Santo, where they would have found it, they veered south towards the new island they had seen to the southwest. On the morning of May 23, being in need of water and of what refreshments the island could offer, Bougainville sent two boats ashore; the Etoile contributed one armed boat. Firewood was obtained, as well as bananas and coconuts, in exchange for small gifts of trinkets and red cloth. Bougainville himself, accompanied by the Prince of Nassau, landed in the afternoon. The presence of the awe-inspiring aristocrat was of value for, when the natives began to display some hostility, he advanced towards them and quelled them by his bearing and his obvious courage. (2) A 'prise de possession' was buried at the foot of a tree, in accordance with the usual custom; the Spanish might have a prior claim, but they had displayed no interest in these islands for nearly two centuries: it was more likely that a more energetic nation like France would add the Great Cyclades to her empire. Little did Bougainville think that, one day, under the name of New Hebrides, bestowed on them

(1) Caro, Journal, 21-22 May 1768. The French were able to refer to the records in the ships' libraries, 'having all the mémoires and all the journals of all the navigators who have passed this way.' Ibid., same date.
(2) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p. 244.

by Cook, they would be jointly administered by France and her traditional rival, England.

Just as the party was about to leave the island, in the late afternoon, the natives suddenly attacked with arrows and stones; a few musket shots were needed to disperse them. (1) Communication had not been easy, since Ahu-toru did not speak their language and their appearance was remarkably unsavoury.

'Many of them were covered with running scabs, others with horrible sores that covered part of the body.' (2)

St. Germain, repelled by their appearance, was cautious in his dealings with them. 'I refused their rush mattings,' he wrote. 'The wounds with which these people are covered and which caused us to give to this island the name of Lepers Island made me fear that these diseases are communicated by clothes which they have worn.' (3)

The symptoms denoted leprosy, yaws and tropical ulcers - perhaps a skin disease known as leucodermia, or an attack of the ringworm called bukwa. (4) Yet the natives of Aoba, Oba or Omba, as the island is now variously called, are today cleaner and healthier than those of the surrounding islands. (5) It seems obvious that Bougainville landed among an afflicted section of the population; there is plenty of evidence that

(1) Caro, Journal, 23-29 May 1768.
(2) St. Germain, Routier Inédit, p. 240.
(3) Ibid., p. 241.
(4) The Voyage of the Resolution and Adventure, (ed. J. C. Beaglehole), p. 457, n5.
(5) Pacific Islands Year Book, 8th edition (1959), p. 423.

Aoba once supported a much bigger population, something which is true of most of the New Hebrides; contact with the less savoury side of European civilisation is at the root of this, but it may have been accentuated by widespread tropical diseases, such as those seen by the French in 1768.

From Aoba, the Boudeuse and the Etoile sailed west, passing between Malekula and the small island of Malo, through the strait which today still bears Bougainville's name. Bougainville sighted, but did not name, Espiritu Santo, the island where Quiros had landed in 1606, but it is not clear whether he realised the extent of the island which he had first seen on the 22nd.(1)

Bougainville's belief that these islands were indeed identical with Quiros's landfall raised another question - was there land nearby? On Vaugondy's map in de Brosses's Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes, Espiritu Santo was shown as an extension of New Holland, although de Brosses, in the text, expressed uncertainty on this point, and considered it more likely that Quiros's discovery was an island.

'To solve the problem, it would be necessary to follow the same parallel for a distance of more than 350 leagues. I resolved on this course, although the state and the quantity of our supplies warned us to seek promptly some European settlement.'(2)

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(1) Ambryn and Malekula were both sighted but not named.
(2) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p. 252.

It was something which no one had yet attempted. Quiros had sailed north towards Manila from Espiritu Santo; Tasman, Roggeween, Byron, Anson, Carteret, Wallis, had all kept well to the north of the New Hebrides, pressed by the need for refreshing their crews, and uncertain of the existence of a passage south of New Guinea. Only Torres, on a voyage that had received no publicity, had penetrated into the Coral Sea. By the time an expedition, particularly an ill-equipped one such as Wallis and Carteret's, had battled its way across the Pacific, it was in no fit condition for further exploration, and it made with all possible speed for known European settlements - Guam, the Philippines or the Dutch East Indies. Bougainville himself was no better off than his predecessors - his stores, in particular, were extremely low - but he was prepared to pay a heavy price to solve the riddle. Within a few days of having made this decision, he was to write 'at supper, we ate some rats, and found them very good.'(1)

While these serious problems were plaguing him, Bougainville went on board the Etoile to consult Chesnard de la Girandais, and he found time to elucidate a comic opera mystery. Rumours had begun to circulate about Baret, Commerson's faithful servant, soon after they had left France, but it was not until the ships reached Tahiti that they crystallised into a certainty - Baret was a woman. The Polynesians had never had any doubts about it, and they, including Ahu-toru, failed to understand why Baret

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(1) Bougainville, Journal, 29-30 May 1768.

should refuse them the favours which their own women were so light-heartedly granting to the French. Baret confessed to Bougainville that she was an orphan ruined by a lawsuit, that she had taken to wearing men's clothes in order to get work, and that curiosity had led her to join the expedition. Such a statement tended to exonerate Commerson of any improper complicity. However, Commerson, a widower since 1762, had employed Baret as a 'gouvernante' since 1764,(1), to look after his son, so that he was clearly a party to the impersonation. To console her, no doubt for the jokes of her shipmates, and as a reward for her devotion he left her 600 livres in his will.(2)

Bougainville, who records this incident in an impassive style, does unbend sufficiently to record that 'one must agree that, if the two ships had been wrecked on some desert island in this vast Ocean, fate would have played a strange trick on Baret.'

St. Germain adds this comment. 'I believe that this girl will be the first of her sex to have circumnavigated the globe.'(3) This can only remain a matter for conjecture, for there would be few official records of such unofficial passengers, but Jeanne Baret is certainly the first known female circumnavigator.

Of greater moment, however, was the question of sailing into the great blank west of the New Hebrides. The ships were in fact heading straight for what is now known as Queensland,

(1) de Montessus, Martyrologe et Biographie de Commerson, p.109.
(2) She disembarked with Commerson at the Ile de France and later married a local resident. In his will, Commerson also left a sum of money for the granting of an annual 'prix de vertu.'
(3) De la Roncière, Routier Inédit, p.237.

and for the Great Barrier Reef that was to bring Cook's Endeavour so close to destruction a few years later.

Fate, kind as ever to the Frenchman, issued a warning to Bougainville on June 4.

'At around eleven in the evening, the Boudeuse, which remained a little ahead of us veered suddenly to starboard, and fired several shots, which is the signal of danger. At once, we saw land to south by south-west, a short league away. It seemed very low... At eight in the morning, we sighted a small sandy island south by south-east, approximately two leagues away; it seemed to be at the most a quarter of a league long and very low.'(1)

Caro called this reef 'l'ile des foux' - Gannet Island. Bougainville gave it the more classical name of Diane Reef. Bougainville places this reef in 15°31' south and 150°46 east of Greenwich, Caro in 15°35' south and 147°28' east. However, de la Giraudais was not sure that the islet seen at 8 a.m. on 5 June was the same as the one sighted on the previous evening at eleven, in the intervening time the ships had sailed NE¼E and W¼SW. A further warning was given on the 6th; the ships had sailed west 3° south and seemed to be approaching land.

'In the past twenty-four hours, many pieces of wood and some fruits have passed alongside. The sea is also much calmer. I have no doubt that there is land to the south by south-east.'(2)

(1) Caro, Journal, 4-5 June 1768.
(2) Bougainville, Journal, 5-6 June 1768.

At 1.30 p.m. on the 6th, breakers were sighted covering a wide area, and again at 5.30. 'A third warning that I should not persist in seeking land along this parallel... At half past six, I set course ~~to~~ NNE.' (1) The latitude which Bougainville gives for this second group of breakers - 15°34' south - corresponds to the position of what is now known as Bougainville Reef.

Thus, he turned away from Australia, which some of his sailors already claimed to have seen. (2) It was agreed by all that it was unwise in the extreme to approach any nearer to this dangerous coast. Caro, on the Etoile, summed up the general feeling on his ship when he wrote, 'it would appear that this part of New Holland is as full of shoals and reefs as the other.' (3) Bougainville, on the other hand, felt it incumbent on him to justify his decision at greater length.

'I had in mind to look for land along the parallel of 15 to 16 degrees south, though not because I am not convinced that the land of Austrialia del Espiritu Santo is any other than the archipelago of the Great Cyclades ... However, since Bellin (4) places - I do not know for what reason - this austral

(1) Bougainville, Journal, 6 - 7 June 1768.
(2) 'Several thought they had seen a low lying land to the South west of the breakers. 'Ibid., 6 - 7 June 1768. It is so marked on his chart.
(3) Caro, Journal, 6 - 7 June 1768.
(4) Jacques Nicolas Bellin (1703/1772) was the author of the Neptune Français, of L'Hydrographic Française, and of Petit Atlas Maritime the last two containing charts of most of the coastlines of the world. He also drew the maps for Abbe Prévost's Histoire Générale des Voyages.

land in 148° of eastern longitude [of Paris], I wanted to advance as far as that point, which would have enabled me to pay a tribute to the ability of that geographer, or else to ~~pay a tribute to the ability of what geographer, or else to~~ pay a visit to a coast which, so far, remains unknown. If, however, I base myself on the latest astronomical observations of M. Verron, I have passed the limit set by Bellin, since yesterday at midday I apparently was in 146°40' of longitude, though according to my dead reckoning I was still 30 leagues from sight of land. The consecutive appearance of these three sets of breakers does not allow me to continue to seek here the continent of Quiros. These approaches are in no way like those mentioned by that navigator... These breakers, so great in extent, announce a low coast, and, when I see that Dampier, in this same latitude of 15°35', forsakes the western coast of this barren land, where there is not even water to drink, and the approaches to which bristle with shoals and reefs, I deduce from it that the east coast is no better... In addition, these pieces of wood, these fruits, this seaweed, that we are finding, the calmness of the sea, the currents, everything tells us that, for several days, we have had land to the south-east... I believe that it runs south-east and north-west like the reefs that defend it.'(1)

He sailed away, believing that this land offered no facility for establishing a colony that would be of any use to the

(1) Bougainville, Journal, 6 - 7 June 1768.

metropolis,(1) for, practical as ever, and remembering de Brosses, he never forgot the possible practical benefits that might accrue from his voyage. It was a conclusion that Cook was brilliantly to explode, but that the French were to cling to for long enough to enable the British to grasp a great opportunity; later French navigators, calling at Port Jackson, were bitterly to regret France's failure to seize the chance of settling Australia. Bougainville, however, has a double justification for his decision to sail northwards - his stores were seriously depleted, and the reefs were forerunners of the Great Barrier that would have led his expedition, in all probability, to total disaster.

He might have sailed round Carpentaria, through the straits of Torres: Vaugondy's map in de Brosses's book does show a strait between New Holland and New Guinea, but most people doubted the existence and the practicability of this strait, since at the time there were only unconfirmed rumours of Torres's voyage. The maps of this area were sufficiently vague to make him hesitate to go forward on the mere strength of Vaugondy's uncorroborated opinion, for if he were wrong Bougainville would find himself imprisoned in a wide gulf from which he would only emerge after much perilous battling against the prevailing winds. It was another risk that conditions on board did not allow him to take.

Land was sighted ahead along the northern horizon on June 10

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(1) Ibid.,6 - 7 June 1768.

'extremely high in the interior, with magnificent lowlands along the sea shore.'(1) At first he found himself caught in a bay - the Cul-de-Sac de l'Orangerie - which did not appear safe enough to him to attempt a landing. He was now at the south east tip of New Guinea. An attempt to turn it, in order to make for the northern coast that would take him to the Dutch settlements, was foiled for several days by winds and by the fast current which flows towards Torres Strait. It required arduous tacking to make any progress eastwards, and then he found his way north barred by a succession of breakers: Long Reef, Calvados Chain and the coral reef lining the island of Tagula. The French could distinguish a series of islands behind the breakers and along the horizon: they named this the Louisiade Archipelago, in honour of the ageing Louis XV. Eventually, after a fortnight of wearying manoeuvres they reached the end of the chain - Rossel Island - and hailed the easternmost point as Cap de la Délivrance. It was not a day too soon - the food rations had again had to be cut down, and strict measures taken to prevent the men eating the very leather off the yards. It is St. Germain who, naturally, enlarges on the growing famine. Towards the end of May, he had written wryly that he had shared a rat with the Prince of Nassau, adding 'Happy we shall be if we can have one often, without the others beginning to acquire a taste for them.' (2) However, as the days went by and conditions worsened, his moderate sense of humour left him.

(1) Ibid., 9-10 June 1768. See Map 16.
(2) De la Roncière, Routier Inédit, p. 243.

'For a long time, I had been asking the steward to give me a list of what he was giving to M. de Bougainville... M. Duclos, the supply officer, in the presence of M. Véron, pilote observateur, and of M. Lavaisse, chaplain, told me that it was none of my business and gave me no satisfaction... M. de Bougainville has eighteen people at his table... [He] has two cooks, a valet, two butlers and three negroes... I cannot prevent myself from pointing out here that, if it is hard for officers to find themselves reduced to the rations of the crew, it is much worse when they see that the commander never eats with them, although he should keep no other table.'(1)

St. Germain tempers these dark insinuations by stating that Bougainville receives only chocolate, barley water, milk and eggs, in addition to the normal fare - so, presumably he succeeded in discovering what the steward was giving the commander - but, he adds, 'this food added to the rest makes his state of health very different [from ours]; his complexion proves this, and he enjoys a most satisfactory fullness of figure, which is something of an insult to the leanness of our faces.'

It was a time when the most adventurous among them began to reflect on the wisdom of embarking on such expeditions. 'Oh, Bellin, how much are you costing us?' exclaimed Bougainville,(2)

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(1) Ibid., p.244. See also Lefranc, Les Compagnons de Bougainville, p.98.
(2) Bougainville, Journal, 22-23 June 1768.

when he was once more compelled to reduce the rations. Caro, in his awkward style, echoed the choruses of 'never again.' 'I shall be well taken in if ever I have to make a second time a voyage around the world.'(1) But, for St. Germain, it was the occasion for a sour, but by no means unsound reappraisal of the entire circumnavigation:

'We feel all the more keenly the careless manner in which this passage has been prepared in that it is causing us to lose the fruit of all our labours. Since Cythera, we have discovered several lands of the finest appearance...But, hard pressed by the lack of food, we were unable to visit any. What can we say even about Cythera? Have we seen the interior of the country? Is M. de Commerson bringing a list of the treasures that it contains or may contain in the way of natural history, plants or minerals? Did we sound the coast? Do we know of a good anchorage there? Of what use is this voyage to the nation? How desirable was it for us to have been able to travel further west? We might perhaps have blazed a trail useful to the nation, or at least made some glorious discovery. The only thing I see, therefore, about this enterprise is, so far, the heavy cost of fitting out two ships ...' (2)

St. Germain has been dismissed as a sick and embittered man - which, no doubt, he was - but the questions he asked did require answering, for they must affect our judgment of

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(1) Caro, Journal, 23-24 June 1768.
(2) De la Roncière, Routier Inédit, pp. 244-5.

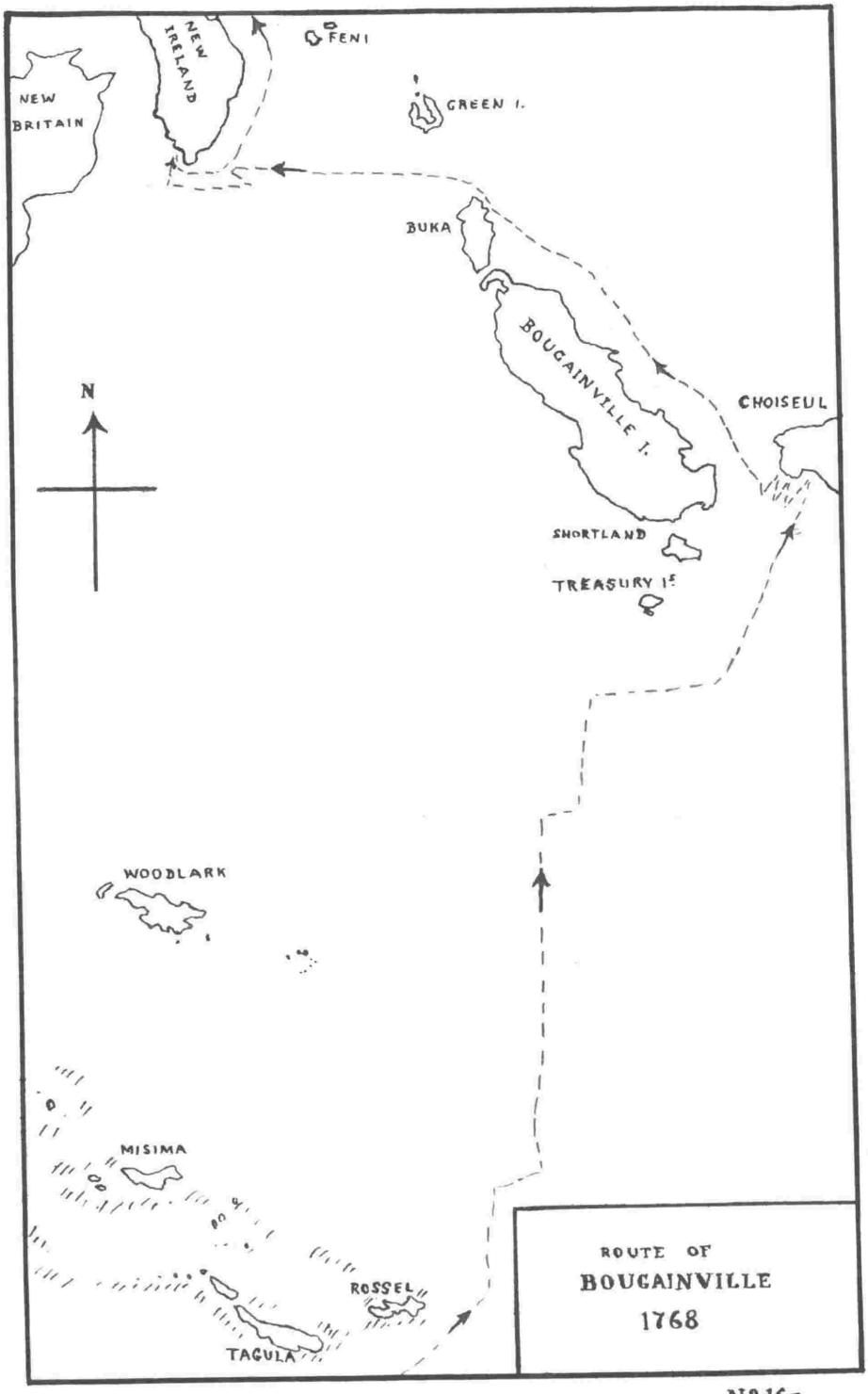
the contribution of Bougainville's expedition to 18th century knowledge. We can dispose of his basic complaint - that the ships were ill-provisioned - by remembering that this was France's first attempt at Pacific exploration, that lessons had to be learned, and that the mistake was not repeated, for considerable care and planning went into future French expeditions. Bougainville, after all, was not a sailor by profession, and he had little experience to go by. Furthermore, his circumnavigation was, in the main, an epilogue to a diplomatic dispute, a postscript to a squabble between the great powers of Europe; as such, it was affected by a time factor that allowed for comparatively little planning. It was a gesture made by the king to a faithful, disappointed courtier, and it would be churlish to complain that it was not greater than it was.

The main criticism that Louis de Bougainville must answer is whether, with the means at his disposal, he might have done more. We have already seen that his published account contained too few navigational details, and that his charts lack accuracy. When he returned to France, interest in his voyage centered on Tahiti. Very well: 'What can we say even about Cythera?' Not much, for sure, and much less would have been said, had not Ahu-toru sailed on the Boudeuse. What the French said about Cythera referred mainly to the willingness with which the Tahitian women displayed the charms of nature. But what of the flora and the fauna of the island? It is unreasonable to expect the French to have penetrated into the

interior in the space of nine days, for the mountainous interior of Tahiti is far from easy to explore, but when we compare Bougainville's expedition with later voyages, such as Baudin's and Freycinet's, we realise how little information, how few specimens, the French brought back. St. Germain is unfair to Commerson whose energy never flagged, but Commerson died at the Ile de France, his notes remained largely unpublished, and his collections became partly dispersed.

Nine days in Tahiti should, as St. Germain suggests, have enabled the ships' boats to sound the coast. That the good anchorage of Matavai Bay and the better one of Papeete escaped their notice is unfortunate, even if, a full exploration of the coast could be said to fall outside the set purpose of the expedition. But can Bougainville escape altogether the challenge in St. Germain's often misquoted 'Of what use is this voyage to the nation?' - a challenge that was only whispered, in view of Bougainville's popularity and charm? No doubt, an experienced sailor and geographer could have done far more - but of how many explorers could the same not be said? What Bougainville did achieve was great enough.

It is somewhat ironical that, as St. Germain was penning those famine-inspired words, the Boudeuse and the Etoile were on the verge of new and important discoveries. The Louisiades had been a trial to them, but France was charting them for posterity. Now, on the last day of June 1768, as the


NEW BRITAIN
NEW IRELAND
FENI
GREEN I.
BUKA
BOUGAINVILLE I.
CHOISEUL
N
SHORTLAND
TREASURY Is.
WOODLARK
MISIMA
ROSSEL
TAGULA
ROUTE OF
BOUGAINVILLE
1768

No. 16a

ships sailed in a northerly direction to avoid the danger of meeting further reefs, and of coming too close to the north-west coast of New Guinea, the French sighted land ahead - land which did not appear on the existing charts. 'What then is this land that stretches nearly up to the 8th degree of latitude? The southernmost part of New Britain and of Dampier Straits are [sic] at most in 6°30'. I hope that shortly we shall be able to solve this geographical problem.' (1)

But the problem was not to be solved until much later, - and not by navigators, but by academic geographers. Bougainville was in sight of the Solomon Islands discovered by Alvaro de Mendaña exactly two centuries earlier, and not seen by any European, except Carteret in 1767, since that time. But Bougainville did not recognise them, ~~as such,~~ for their location on charts was erratic, and he was, furthermore, in a part of the Solomons which Mendaña had not seen. When his account of the voyage was published in 1771, the Solomon Islands were shown as a small group north of Hoorn Islands, and to their name was added the note: 'Whose existence and position are doubtful. (2)

The Boudeuse and the Etoile sailed first past the small islands of Gannonga, Baga and Vella Lavella in the southern group, then past the Treasury Islands in the southwest, (3) and towards a larger island to the north, to which the French

(1) Bougainville, Journal, 30 June - 1 July 1768.
(2) Vivès, states that the newly-discovered group was named 'Dangerous Archipelago.' This was presumably the temporary name given on the Etoile, unless it is simply an error. Journal, P. 124.
(3) Caro, Journal, 27-28 June 1768, reports seeing five islands stretching from north-west by north to east at 8 a.m. on the 28th.

gave the name of Choiseul.(1)

They attempted to anchor off Choiseul, but darkness and the tide foiled the attempt, and the few natives they saw encouraged them to sail away. The dark Melanesians were obviously more warlike and of a less happy disposition than the 'Indians' of Tahiti.(2) Bougainville then veered to the north-west, towards a larger island which still today bears Bougainville's name, as does the strait that divides it from Choiseul Island. They sailed along the northern coast of Bougainville Island, past the smaller island of Buka (3) which they left behind them on July 4.

Two days later, they reached New Ireland where, at last, they found a haven in a bay they called Port Praslin (4). However, as they were unaware of the discovery of St. George's Channel, they believed themselves to be in New Britain; Carteret, indeed, had preceded them, not only in St. George's Channel, but also at Buka. Port Praslin - or, as it is now known Kambotorosch Harbour - was close to where the Englishman himself had anchored a short time before.

A sailor, looking for cockles along the shore, found a lead plaque buried in the sand, with the remains of an English inscription. Looking for further traces, they found signs of

(1) After César-Gabriel de Choiseul, duc de Praslin, minister of the navy from April 1766 to April 1771.
(2) Bougainville, Journal, 30 June - 1 July 1768. The French had to fire in self-defence, and a number of natives were killed - 'Un grand nombre,' says La Giraudais, Journal, 1 July 1768.
(3) 'Three canoes with negroes surrounded our ship... They repeated several times 'a boca, boca'; de la Roncière, Routier Inédit, p. 246. 'A boca' is a native call for attention, probably most easily translated as 'Hey, over here!'.
(4) It did not receive this name until later. The first name chosen by Bougainville was Port Duverseau. Journal, 13 July 1768.

an English camp, some three miles to the north, dating back, they estimated, some four months.

Port Praslin had a good beach, four brooks, plenty of firewood and no inhabitants; the anchorage was safe and so convenient that those on the ships and those on shore were within hailing distance of each other; the sick could walk along the beach in safety and even in the surrounding bush, but there was very little in the way of fruit.

Each one busied himself. The ships were cleaned, stores were brought up from below and examined, before being shared equally between the Boudeuse and the Etoile; Véron observed an eclipse of the sun which enabled him to fix accurately the position of the port. (1) Commerson botanised and the Prince went hunting; a sailor was bitten by a snake, while another died of an illness which Bougainville takes pain to point out was not scurvy, and which may have been the result of the welcome at Tahiti. (2)

The food problem made it imperative for them to depart. The last few days were marked by incessant storms and by an earthquake; the stay had been a welcome break, but hardly a pleasant one. It rained continually and their departure was delayed for several days while they awaited an improvement in the weather (3) Bougainville gave full rein to his ire.

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(1) 4°49'27" south by 149°44'15" east of Paris. Ibid., 18-19 July 1768.
(2) 'His illness was complicated and had no relation to scurvy,' Ibid., 10 July 1768. 'Une inflammation du bas-ventre,' states Vivès, Journal, p. 125.
(3) Caro, Journal, 22 July 1768. The anchorage was called 'Port-à-la-Pluie;' Vivès, Journal, p. 125.

'Shall I always have to write - bad weather, strong wind, gale, continual rain? Our crews are overburdened; this land provides them only with an unhealthy air and an excess of work...The only refreshments which the woods provide us with are some latania and cabbage palms, and even then they are few in number and we must fight over them with enormous ants, droves of which have forced us to abandon several of these trees which we had already felled.'(1)

Before he left, he had taken possession of the island, in spite of admitting that the British had got there first. It cost nothing, and it was a gesture that would look well when the French reported to Paris. The Englishman who had anchored just north of Port Praslin had indeed left his own inscription behind, but it had not stood up very long, since the French had dug up a fragment of it from the sand. St. Germain duly set to work to claim the island for France.

'In the year 1768, on 12 July, we, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, colonel in the infantry, captain of the King's ships, commanding the frigate La Boudeuse et l'Etoile, in the name and by order of His Most Christian Majesty, under the ministry of M. de Choiseul, Duc de Praslin, have taken possession of these islands, in testimony whereof we have left the present inscription, corresponding to the Act of Possession which we are taking to France.(2)

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(1) Bougainville, Journal, 18-19 July 1768.
(2) De la Roncière, Routier Inédit, p.247.

On the 24th, the ships sailed at last, leaving their inscription to moulder into oblivion on an island which the French had misnamed,(1) since they were naturally unaware of Carteret's discovery of St. George's Channel. Their route now led them north, not realising that they could have shortened the journey by sailing westward into St. George's Channel. They were frequently surrounded by canoes from New Ireland or from one of the offshore islands, and attacks by natives were not rare. (2)

La Giraudais underlines the frequency of these incidents: 'Every day there came to us canoes with 30 and 40 [men] to try to capture us, and [they] were forced to return carrying the wounded and the dead, sometimes the water around their canoe was red with it, and some of their canoes sunk to the bottom with muskets and blunderbusses. They threw stones on board as big as two fists.' (3)

Bougainville named these islands after his officers - Duclos had already had a small island in St. George's Bay named after him (4) it was now the turn of de Bournand (Feni Island), d'Oraison (Tanga Island), du Bouchage (Lihir or Lihur Island) and de Suzannet (Tabar Island), each one in order of seniority.

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(1) 'We have at last left this barren and damp hole...The land which I believe to be New Britain...I suspect that we are leaving the bay which Dampier calls Bay St. George.' Bougainville, Journal, 24-25 July 1768.
(2) E.g. Caro, Journal, entries of 27 to 31 July 1768.
(3) La Giraudais, Journal, 28 July 1768. La Giraudais's spelling is as erratic as his syntax.
(4) Bougainville, Journal, 6 July 1768.

By early August, the ships had turned the northern island of the New Ireland chain, and were making practically due west towards the Dutch East Indies. They sailed north of the main Admiralty group until they were close to the Equator. It was Commerson's turn to give his name to an island - and his, Sae, still retains it today. One island, which they sighted on the 8th, part of the Kaniet group, appeared to support a large population, to judge by the number engaged in fishing, and as none of them stopped work to approach the ships or seemed disturbed in any way by the strange vessels, Bougainville named it Anchorites Island.

On the following morning, a line of low islands appeared, 'well wooded, but protected by reefs. Disastrous encounter. I have named this chain of islands l'Echiquier.'(1) This unwelcome chain of dangers was the Ninigo group, north-west of Manus Island. L'Ile de la Boudeuse is Liot Island, and several islets shown on the chart to the west of it may be an approximate indication of Wuvulu. Bougainville was now sailing on a south-westerly course and, on the 11th, land was sighted to the west by south-west, which was obviously the northern coast of New Guinea.(2) It was therefore necessary to seek a more northerly latitude, to avoid it, and he spent the remainder of August close to the Equator. Meanwhile, scurvy was spreading rapidly and, by late August, the surgeons counted

(1) Literally: the chessboard of the exchequer, but, in fact, a reference to a line of ships in bow and quarter line arrangement. Bougainville, Journal, 8-9 August 1768.
(2) Caro, Journal, 10-11 August 1768.

forty-five cases.

'Each day brings new victims. What food, good Lord, is ours.' Small quantities of putrid bread, and meat whose smell can be supported only by the most dauntless, once the salt is soaked off it. In any other circumstances, our salt provisions would all be thrown into the sea.' (1)

The Etoile was forcing the Boudeuse to take in sail; the flute was wallowing and creaking abominably. 'That ship is not going at all well,' commented Bougainville. (2) 'People have long argued about the location of Hell, frankly, we have discovered it.' (3) On 19 August, they killed and ate their last dog; on the 24th, the first death from scurvy - that of Denis Coutoux, the boatswain (4) - was reported; on the 26th, they finished the last of their vegetables. (5) Yet, in spite of all his troubles, Bougainville was still able to appreciate a fine tropical night and to round off his log with a poetical phrase.

'The night was more favourable to us, thanks to Latona's daughter, whose silvery light enabled us to tack between the rocks and the islets.' (6)

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(1) Bougainville, Journal, 12-13 August 1768.
(2) Bougainville, Journal, 14-15 August 1768.
(3) Ibid. 16-17 August 1768.
(4) Ibid., 23-24 August 1768.
(5) Ibid., 25-26 August 1768.
(6) Ibid., 26-27 August 1768.

A few days later, the long struggle around New Guinea was ended, for he reached Geram Island, the first of the Moluccas. Hoping to get a good reception, he flew a Dutch flag, only to find the place deserted - the natives were in revolt against the Dutch company and, taking the French ships for a punitive expedition, they had fled to the hills. There was nothing for it but to sail on to the next island - Buru - where an important trading post of the Dutch East India Company was established. It was, strictly speaking, out of bounds to all except Dutch ships, but Bougainville's written request for help was accepted, and during the six days' stay, he took on board rice, oxen, sheep and other supplies - highly priced but badly needed.

The two ships sailed from Buru on September 7, but the French were not yet at the end of their troubles, although their first contact with Europeans since they had sailed from Buenos Ayres nearly ten months earlier was pretext enough for celebrations.(1) The Dutch had refused them a pilot to assist them through the labyrinth of islands that lay in front of them, and the vague French charts they had on board were more likely to confuse them than to help them. It was the policy of the Dutch to keep out all intruders, and to defend their monopoly by publishing no information about East Indian waters, and by

(1) September 10: Julien Launzi died, having been attacked by scurvy. 'He was beginning to convalesce; two bouts of brandy killed him.' Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, pp. 320-1. Caro Journal, 10-11 September 1768, reports this and adds: 'our men are much better.' Bougainville was insistent on the fact that scurvy was not directly responsible for more than one death, an achievement of which he was rightly proud.

encouraging the spread of rumours about the dangers of inter-island navigation. The latter were fortunately exaggerated, although Bougainville was not to know this: as he sailed slowly through the seas and straits, he was pleasantly surprised to find his work much easier than he had anticipated. He had, however, the good fortune to have on board a French sailor with experience in the Molucca sea - 'a French sailor from Le Havre who has been sailing in these waters for the last six to seven years, who has made three or four journeys from Batavia to Amboyna, Buton, Buru, who has passed twice through this strait... He was on one of the ships that were at Buru; he fled on board the Boudeuse where he was well received. M. de Bougainville is pleased to have him.'(1)

The French thus proceeded, with growing confidence, towards Java, buying supplies from the natives on the way. 'We are now in a state of abundance,' wrote Caro. 'Our sick have recovered... The rest of our work is a mere bagatelle compared with the past.'(2)

Bougainville did not lose his interest in international strategy and trade; as usual, the doings of the British aroused his suspicions. What had that ship been doing which had anchored in St. George's Bay? Endeavouring, no doubt, to establish a settlement of some kind in the Moluccas; the Resident at Cayeli had told him that this was what the Dutch were afraid of, for, as he had said, 'they are continually prowling around these

(1) Caro, Journal, 12-13 September 1768.
(2) Ibid., 16-17 and 20-21 September 1768.

islands.' (1) Now, seeing the wealth of the Dutch East Indies for the first time, Bougainville realised the opportunities that offered here, and exclaimed. 'Oh, my country, awake; it is time. Neptune has not sworn you an eternal hatred. Is he not actually well-disposed towards Venus' favourites? But it is only by regular devotion that one obtains the favours of the gods.'

On September 28, the ships saluted the fort of Batavia, with a twenty-one gun salute which was returned in full. On the following day, the French went ashore, but they found that, as a result of their east to west crossing of the Pacific, the date was in fact the 30th. The Dutch received them 'in the best manner possible,' (2) and the twenty-eight sick on board the two ships were cared for in the Batavia hospital. The French started to lay in supplies for the return home but, after a week, illness appeared among the crew - this time, dysentery, a frequent scourge in Batavia, and the cause of many deaths during the eighteenth century. To escape the pestilential air of the city, Bougainville went to anchor outside the harbour and, warned also about the impending monsoonal change, he decided to cut short his stay. Bougainville did not alter the dating of his log until he had reached the Ile de France, which he considered the real end of his voyage; according to his reckoning, he left Batavia on 17 October 1768, the correct date being the 18th.

(1) Bougainville, Journal, 1-2 September 1768.
(2) Caro, Journal, 28-29 September 1768.

Malaria was now adding its ravages to those of dysentery and, soon after the departure, two men died.

On 7 November, the Boudeuse arrived at the Ile de France; the Etoile dropped anchor on the following day.(1) They had sailed across the Pacific with no major mishaps; it was ironical that, at the entrance to Port Louis, the Boudeuse ran aground while under the control of the royal port pilot. Bougainville extricated himself without too much difficulty, and landed at last on French soil. A few days later, du Bouchage, one of the Boudeuse's ensigns, died of dysentery. Commerson also disembarked, not without a feeling of relief, since he suffered from seasickness; his intention was to study the natural history of the island, in the company of his valet, but his work was to be brought to a halt by his death a few years later.(2) Véron, the astronomer, prepared to leave for Pondicherry, where he intended to observe the transit of Venus. Others, such as de Romainville, the ingénieur, (3) also left, some soldiers joining the garrison, a few sailors transferring to other ships.

The Boudeuse sailed on December 12, leaving the Etoile to be careened. Since the expedition was now virtually over, there was no further need for the two ships to travel together.

(1) La Giraudais, Journal, 8 November 1768.
(2) J. Lefranc comments that 'Commerson wrote a great deal, especially letters, but we have from him, at the Museum of Natural History , only some incomplete and brief accounts of a few incidents of the voyage.' Bougainville et ses Compagnons, p. 84. His work in Mauritius, carried out with the assistance of Poivre, and, after him, of Maillard du Mesle is related in de Montessus, Martyrologe et Biographie de Commerson.
~~(3) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p. 386.~~

There was one strange sequel to the Pacific crossing. In the North Atlantic, the Boudeuse caught up with a slow British ship - it was Carteret's Swallow, returning home after ~~its~~ her circumnavigation, at a pace that belied her name. Carteret refused Bougainville's help, but handed him some letters destined for France which he had collected at Capetown. With a courtesy that was not unmixed with pride, Carteret gave the Frenchman an arrow he had collected in the Pacific; Bougainville gravely accepted but did not reveal that he himself had made the same journey. When the Boudeuse sailed on, it was as if the Englishman was still at anchor. 'How he must have suffered on such a poor ship!' exclaimed Bougainville.(1)

The Boudeuse dropped anchor in St. Malo on 16 March 1769. She had been away for two years and four months, during which time only seven men had been lost. On the Etoile, which arrived a month later, only two men had died as a result of illness.

Bougainville's success was immediate. He had always been likeable and popular, he was a man of evident charm, well attuned to the trends of his day, something of a courtier,(2) and yet fully in sympathy with the scientists and the thinkers of the Age of Enlightenment. He had left on a sad mission, the

(1) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, p.386.
(2) 'An excellent dancer of minuets at Versailles', as H.Jacquier puts it in 'Le Mirage et l'Exotisme Tahitiens dans la Littérature', vol. VII, No.1 of Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Océaniennes, p.10.

victim of the animosity of France's rivals, yet, undaunted, he had circumnavigated the world, and carried the king's flag for the first time across the Pacific; what Anson, Byron and Carteret had accomplished, a Frenchman could do equally well. National pride raised the pioneer on to a pedestal from which all the tribulations of revolutionary France never toppled him.

To have sailed at all and to have returned with so few losses was in itself an extraordinary achievement for a man who was not a professional sailor, and who had never had any formal training. His success carried its own reward, for of all the French explorers who sailed into the Pacific in the late eighteenth century, he was the only one who survived the voyage.(1)

Although he made only a few discoveries of importance - his main contribution being the coasting of the unknown Louisiades and of part of the Solomons - he laid the foundations for later French exploration in Pacific waters, and brought back a great deal of valuable information on little known archipelagos. It was he who re-orientated French interest towards the Pacific. It can be said with obvious truth that Marion du Fresne's expedition was a direct result of his voyage, but circumstances limited its scope and its value; it was the official expeditions of Kerguelen and of La Pérouse that ~~ha~~ can be said to derive

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(1) The single exception is Marchand, whose discovery of the northern Marquesas was only incidental to his voyage, and who, therefore, can hardly be reckoned among the leaders of expeditions of discovery.

their origin from Bougainville.

Within a very short time, he had prepared for the press an account of his voyage. It included maps of considerable value to the reader who wished to follow his travels, though, as we have seen, of less value to the geographer and the sailor, but it enabled Bougainville to reach a wider public. Literature was the medium most likely to gain him a hearing in pre-revolutionary France. The salons received him, discussed him, read him, and thus enabled him to bring the question of Pacific exploration out of the assembly halls of learned societies into the far more influential circles of politicians and Littérateurs. No one could venture on a journey of any magnitude at the time without considerable official support, and it was Bougainville who reminded France that geography could not advance unless the sailors were encouraged to set out into the unknown seas. Tactfully and gracefully, he stressed the dangers of mere theorising.

'Geography is a science of facts; one cannot pay homage to a theory in one's library without running the risk of making the gravest errors, which are then only corrected at the expense of the navigators.' (1)

It was what de Brosses had advocated; now the message was repeated in a manner that would reach a much wider public. Bougainville's success, and the able manner in which he exploited it, made France's entry into the field of Pacific exploration a

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(1) Bougainville, Voyage de la Boudeuse, (1772) vol.II, p.17.

certainty and, indeed, from the national standpoint, a necessity. That is why Faivre writes of Bougainville that his real success was a literary one. (1)

Wooing the public has, for an explorer, the drawback of having to present his travels in an appealing manner and of having to omit scientific data. There are few nautical details in Bougainville's Voyage, longitudes and latitudes are infrequently given, (2) there are few pictures or sketches, few truly valuable reports on the islands visited, on the natives, on the Flora or Fauna. (3) Classical allusions abound but, if geography is a science of facts, then there is not a great deal of geography to be found in Bougainville's pages.

Nor did he bring much back with him for the various museums which the learned societies were building up in Paris and in the provinces - their time was to come later, towards the end of the century and the beginning of the next, when French expeditions were to return with a real flood of natural history specimens of all descriptions.

But what Bougainville did bring back to France - a real Tahitian - caused more sensation than the carefully packed crates of Baudin or of Freycinet. The presence of Ahu-toru in Paris caught the fashionable fancy of the time. Pleasant,

(1) L'Expansion Française dans le Pacifique, p. 66.
(2) A source of complaint from Cook, as we have seen, but the Englishman's comment on the published account summarised the views of most people: 'I think it the most useful as well as the most entertaining Voyage through these Seas yet publishe Voyage of the Resolution and the Adventure, (ed. J. C. Beaglehole), P. 235. (3) The exception is Tahiti, to which Bougainville devotes pages 209-32 of his first edition, plus a fifteen -page vocabulary of the Tahitian tongue.

quietly spoken, both on account of bewilderment and of a limited vocabulary, the Tahitian was as enchanted with Paris as the French were with him. (1) His arrival, furthermore, coincided with the current vogue of Jean Jacques Rousseau's two Discourses on the corrupting influence of society and on inequality. Rousseau claimed that man, having emerged from his natural state into an artificial and intricate society, had been depraved by the false environment in which he was compelled to spend his days. It was a simple, if unjustified, line of reasoning that led Rousseau to argue from there that, if the ills of modern society are due to its increasing complexity, then it should be possible to find in a simple society the happiness which men found so hard to achieve in Europe. Olden days often tend to become enshrined as 'good old days'; the further one goes back in time, the nearer one gets to a mythological Golden Age, or to a primeval Earthly Paradise. From there, it is easy to conclude that native societies, particularly on remote islands uncorrupted by any contact with modern civilisation, harbour nobility of mind and the simple virtues of the uninhibited and happy savage. It was, in substance, an attack on privilege and on the artificiality of Versailles; there was nothing in the venal court of Louis XV, nothing in the troubled state of civilised

(1) The British, a few years later, were equally enchanted by the visit of Omai, whom Cook brought to England. See T.B. Clark, Omai, the first Polynesian ambassador to England ... how he was feted by Fanny Burney, approved by Samuel Johnson, entertained by Mrs Thrale and Lord Sandwich and painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Europe, to challenge Rousseau's claims. The only answer that might be found lay in the unborn science of anthropology.

Rousseau's second Discourse was published in 1755. The intervening years had only made his views more popular. It was no coincidence that Mrs. Aphra Behn's novel Oroonoko, for instance, dealing with the tribulations of a noble negro at the hands of unworthy civilised white men, should have been among the most popular English novels being read in France at the end of the eighteenth century. (1) It had first been translated into French in 1745, and was to be reprinted seven times between that year and 1799; the fourth edition appeared in 1769 - the year Ahu-toru arrived in Paris.

Ahu-toru therefore descended upon a society that was prepared to acclaim him as one whose basic goodness had never been corrupted by the false trappings of civilisation, but, as if this were not enough, he came surrounded by an aura of romanticism, spiced with a picturesque libertinism that was wholly delightful to a country where the pursuit of love was fashionable, but still officially condemned. The simplicity of Ahu-toru's ideas, and the limited means at his disposal for expressing them, encouraged the wildest flights of fancy. Bougainville himself did nothing to encourage the theorists or the addle-pated, but there were others among the members of the expedition who were not slow in singing the praises of Tahiti. (2)

(1) Edward D. Seeber, 'Oroonoko in France in the XVIIIth Century,' in Publications of the Modern Languages Association of America, vol. II, No. 4, December 1936, p. 955.

(2) The British, under Wallis, had been equally enthusiastic, creating a confused mirage which de Surville set out to pursue.

Of these, the most lyrical was Philibert Commerson who, in a latin inscription, described himself as its 'adorator perpetuus'. (1) Was the middle-aged botanist, fresh from his adventure with Baret, something of a voluptuary? It seems probable, to judge from the enthusiasm with which, while the Boudeuse and the Etoile were still on their way to France, he penned a letter to his friend the astronomer Lalande, describing in exuberant terms life and love in Tahiti. It was reprinted in the Mercure de France of November 1769, (2) and thus became widely known long before Bougainville's more balanced account of the island was published.

Commerson was a 'fanatic admirer of Rousseau's ideas,' (3) who was blinded by his own imagination. In New Cythera, he believed that he had found 'the state of natural man, born essentially good, free from all preconceptions, and following, without suspicion and without remorse, the gentle impulse of an instinct that is always sure because it had not yet degenerated into reason.' His comments on love in Tahiti can be disposed of summarily, but his description of Tahiti, which is sheer nonsense, is not what one would expect from a scientifically-minded visitor:

'The correctness of their behaviour towards women, who are in no way subjugated among them, the brotherly love that exists

(1) Post-scriptum, sur l'île de la Nouvelle Cythère ou Taity, par M. Commerson, docteur en médecine, April 1768, B.N. N.A.F. 9407/146-7.
(2) An English translation is appended in B.G. Corney's The Quest and Occupation of Tahiti, vol. II, Pp. 461-2. The French text is given in de Montessus Martyrologe et Biographie de Commerson vol. VII., pp. 58-62.
(3) H. Jacquier, 'Le Mirage et l'Exotisme Tahitiens dans la littérature,' No. 2., p. 50.

between them all, the horror they feel towards the shedding of human blood...'

These statements selected at random, run counter to historical facts, but, through the Mercure de France, they became accepted by the Parisians. It is no wonder that the fashionable poet, l'abbé Dellile, was moved to compose a poem on Ahu-toru in which he describes the Tahitian, who 'regretted in his heart his sweet freedom, his smiling island and his easy pleasures,' embracing a tree that he recognises while walking in the botanical gardens. There were others who were more than ready to support Commerson, particularly among the younger members of the expedition who found in the sexually uninhibited Tahitian society attractions they found hard to resist, and easy to build up into the characteristics of Utopia.

'If happiness consists in an abundance of all things necessary to life, in living in a superb land with the finest climate, in enjoying the best of health, in breathing the purest and most salubrious air, in leading a simple, soft, quiet life, free from all passions, even from jealousy, although surrounded by women, if these women can themselves even dispense happiness, then I say that there is not in the world a happier nation than the Tahitian one.' (1)

Such harmless ineptitudes gave way to more serious discussions. Diderot, the Eucyclopaedist, erected on the supposed equality of the sexes in Tahiti a plea for a freer relationship

(1) C.F.P.Fesche, La Nouvelle Cythère, p.XXX, Fesche was a volontaire on the Boudeuse. He had sailed on the Aigle as a piloton, or apprentice, on the first expedition to the Falklands Islands; see Dom Pernetty, Histoire d'un Voyage aux Iles Malouines fait en 1763 et 1764.

between the sexes in Europe.(1) Indeed, if Commerson's description were correct, then Rousseau's theory of the noble savage became justified, and the framework of European civilisation was shown up as a sham merely erected to cheat man of his true inheritance. From the botanist's original outburst, a full philosophical controversy followed. Ahu-toru and Tahiti, indeed, were only camouflage, for the French State viewed with disfavour arguments that undermined its constitution. Montesquieu had shielded himself behind an imaginary Persian, Voltaire concealed his satire behind the simplicity of Candide. A lack of skill in presenting a plea for reform meant a 'lettre de cachet' and an indefinite stay in the Bastille. Bougainville's voyage was, as Jacquier puts it, merely a pretext to enable Diderot to express his criticisms on social inequalities, on marriage, on religion, or on property.(2) The same pattern is evident in 'Zoraï', a play in verse by Marignie performed in Paris on 6 October 1782. The scene is New Zealand; Zoraï, like Ahutoru, has returned from a stay of several years in France, while the villain has spent a similar period in England. But there, any connection with the Pacific ends, and the play, full of impassioned speeches about liberty and the rule of law, was so obviously a vehicle for ill-disguised attacks on the government that it was promptly banned. When the Revolution opened the door to reform and freedom of speech, the Tahitian myth dissolved to

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(1) In Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville. See H. Jacquier, op.cit., vol. VII. No. 2., p. 60. A similar argument is outlined in La Dixmerie's Le Sauvage de Tahiti aux Francais, (Paris, 1770.)

(2) Jacquier, Op.cit., p. 103.

reappear under a new, purely literary, guise.(1) But to the ordinary Frenchman or Frenchwoman of 1769, Ahu-toru was the true embodiment of Rousseau's theories.

Twenty years after the visit of the Boudeuse and the Etoile to Tahiti, the legend was as strong as ever. 'The nearer an island is to Tahiti, the better are its customs, the more fruitful is its soil, the happier are its people. Thou art in the midst of all these islands as the sun is among the stars, O Tahiti. How beautiful are thy women, and how gentle are thy men!" wrote Joseph Joubert in 1787 (2), and he added, as a rider, 'Perhaps the best of men among us is he who, through the medium of philosophy, has finally become what a young Tahitian is by nature.'(3)

It was Joubert who, through a friend, influenced Chateaubriand, so that the noble Tahitian was passed on from the age of Rousseau to the age of Romanticism, to find himself echoed in Victor Hugo, with more distant reflections in the works of Pierre Loti. (4)

But if the French found in Tahiti an island paradise, the Spanish were less impressed. To them the stragetic and economic

(1) 'This golden dream was to vanish with the dawn of the nineteenth century which witnessed the development of the idea of the perfectibility of mankind.' J.M.Gautier, "Apogée et déclin du mirage Tahitien en Angleterre et en France (1766-1802)' in Journal de la Société des Océanistes, vol.VII, No.7, Dec.1951, p.272.
(2) H.Jaquier, op.cit., vol.VII, No.2., p.66.
(3) ibid., p.67.
(4) See 'Tahiti dans la littérature française à la fin du XVIIIe siècle; quelques ouvrages oubliés' by J.Gautier in Journal de la Société des Océanistes vol.III, No.3, 1947, pp.43-56, showing by four examples the transition from the philosophical and political novel to the Romantic one.

consequences of the occupation of the island by a European power were of greater moment. The news of Bougainville's voyage, coming so soon after that of Wallis, and to be followed within a year by Cook's expedition, made it obvious that Tahiti, more than any other Pacific island, was gaining a prominence that could only be harmful to the South American colonies, protected as these were by the policy of exclusiveness. A complete protectionist policy could not be maintained if a foreign - and possibly at times an enemy - power were to settle in Tahiti.

Two Frenchmen, Bougainville and de Surville, were instrumental in bringing about one of the last efforts of Spain in the Pacific. The latter led to the rediscovery of Easter Island by Don Felipe Gonzalez; the former, together with his British rivals, gave rise to Domingo de Bonechea's voyage to Tahiti, and to the Spaniard's abortive attempt to establish a settlement on the island, with colonists, soldiers and missionaries.(1) It was the first disturbance in the Tahiti paradise, and the portent of the political troubles that were - at times in a setting reminiscent of comic-opera - to shake the island and its people, until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Bougainville himself made no attempt to return to the Pacific, but his adventurous spirit did not rest; he busied

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(1) See Domingo de Bonechea's instructions dated 22 September 1772 in B.G. Corney, The Quest and Occupation of Tahiti by the Emissaries of Spain, vol.I, pp.263-78.

himself with plans for an expedition to the Arctic. The French government, however, slowly working itself up for a comprehensive exploration of the Pacific, had neither the resources to fit out such an expedition, nor the intention to be diverted from its new purpose. The War of 1778 provided him with a command under the Comte d'Estaing, and later under the Comte de Grasse. Marriage also supervened and helped to tie him down.(1) Age anyhow was catching up with him, for when the Revolution came he was in his sixtieth year and, although the Empire brought him the position and honours for which he had always secretly yearned,(2) his time was over.

When he died, in 1811, the boundaries of France stretched from the Pyrenees to Hamburg, her influence from southern Spain to the northern Baltic, the European powers lay prostrate under French domination, and Bougainville's old bête-noire, Britain, was herself isolated and threatened with invasion. Fate was again kind to her favourite when she removed him from the world at a time when the Napoleonic adventure was at its zenith.

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(1) He married in 1780, Flore Josèphe de Longchamps de Montendre, of an old naval family. They had four sons, one of whom, Hyacinthe, also headed an expedition into the Pacific. Lefranc, 'Les Compagnons de Bougainville p. 249.

(2) He was made a Senator and Count of the Empire. His advice was sought on later voyages, and he was made a member of the Institute.

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DE SURVILLE.

The Seven Years' War, in destroying the French Empire in India, had dealt a heavy blow to the French India Company. It became obvious to many that the Company, never in a very flourishing state, would soon collapse unless the king were, once again, to come to its aid. But the finances of the kingdom were in a desperate condition - by 1769 it seemed as if only a miracle could prevent national bankruptcy - and the hard-pressed 'Contrôleurs des Finances' (1) had more serious problems on their hands than the shoring up of the 44-year-old monopoly. Indeed they preferred to liquidate the Company, not only because of their general policy of retrenchment, but also because some of the Company's assets could be sold and their proceeds used to reduce the huge national deficit.(2) There were furthermore, plenty of merchants and financiers ready to argue that private traders would be more successful than the Company, which had been continually hampered by political and diplomatic considerations.

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(1) There were 3 within a period of 15 months: L'Averdy who resigned in Oct. 1768, Maynon d'Invan who resigned in Dec. 1769, and the Abbé Terray.

(2) The Abbé Terray, whose policy was one of retrenchment, was able partly to cushion the huge deficit of 1770 in this way. (See A. Renaudet, Etudes sur l'Histoire Intérieure de la France (Les Finances), p. 65.)

To those directly affected, the problem was thus no longer how to save the Company, but how to retain some means of livelihood after its disappearance. For some, the matter was solved by the king himself. The monopoly was abolished by decree on 13 August 1769, and the Company dissolved in April of the following year; a considerable proportion of the naval personnel entered the Royal Navy.(1). But to the adventurous there were other chances offering, for the king, while bringing down the unwieldy edifice, was prepared to do all he could afford in order to promote private trade. Now a vast field opened out to all merchants in the Isle de France and Isle de Bourbon, as well as to those in India, and both liberty and protection were guaranteed to all shipowners, so that they could sail and trade in safety.(2). There would be opportunities aplenty for those who knew the East, who had connections and some private resources, and ~~who~~ would be ready in good time to take over the trade. It was not only the Parisian economists who believed that success would smile on private traders in areas where the remotely controlled Company had failed.(3)

(1) P. Bonassieux, 'Les Grandes Compagnies de Commerce,' pp. 312-3.
(2) Ibid., p. 311.
(3) This belief was soon justified for, whereas the annual average trade turnover in the India Co's. area had been in the region of 8¼ millions, in the 1770's it rose to over 20 million. Ibid., p. 313.

Such thoughts had occupied the mind of Jean François Marie de Surville as far back as 1765. De Surville, at that time captain of the Duc de Praslin, was taking to Pondicherry the newly appointed Governor, Jean Law de Lauriston (1), and the two discussed the possibility of trade in eastern seas, now that peace had been restored. It was obvious that a great deal of capital would be required to make such a venture really successful. Chevalier, Governor of Chandernagor, another French settlement in India, was accordingly brought into a scheme whereby the partners established a syndicate for trade in the Indian Ocean and beyond. Chevalier, an extremely wealthy man, agreed to invest 300,000 livres (2) - over £15,000.

On his return to France in late 1766, de Surville approached the moribund Company and obtained permission to trade in the area covered by its monopoly. He then had built for the syndicate a ship (3) of 650 tons and 36 guns, the 'Saint Jean Baptiste,

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(1) He was the nephew of the Scottish financier. He and his brother Jacques came under the patronage of the Duchess of Bourbon when their uncle's bank collapsed; the Bourbons who had sold out their investment for 200 millions at the height of the Law boom had every reason to be grateful to the financier. Both the Laws were men of substance: Jacques, who followed a military career, had fought in India under Dupleix, and been captured by Lawrence at the siege of Trichonopoly; he later became a Marshal and count of the Empire under Napoleon. H. Montgomery Hyde, 'John Law', p. 192; H. I. Priestley, 'France Overseas through the Old Regime', p. 193.

(2) Appeal for the judicial liquidation of the syndicate, dated 14 August 1779, folio I. ATL MS W. 14.

(3) A frigate, as Pottier de l'Horme, the second lieutenant, calls it in his Journal.

which was fitted out in the shipyards of Nantes.(1) The funds at his disposal being insufficient for this purpose, he borrowed a further 50,000 livres from two traders from Lorient, Bourgeois and Gallois, 'to which extent they were brought into the partnership under the same conditions as M. Chevalier and himself.' (2) Whether de Surville ever mentioned this to his partners in India is not clear - Guillaume Labé, who later joined the trading syndicate, certainly does not mention it, (3) and Chevalier's agent in France, de Rabet, took no notice of their claims when he began to dispose of the assets in 1773.

In June 1767, de Surville sailed from Port Louis, in Brittany, and, after a call at the Ile de France, he arrived at the mouth of the Ganges in March of the following year.

Plans went ahead for the trading ventures. The syndicate was now larger, for it included not only Chevalier, Law, de Surville who had invested all he could spare, including his wife's dowry of 60,000 livres (4), and the two neglected merchants of Lorient, but also two French traders resident in

(1) P. Monneron, the ship's clerk, states that the 'Company authorised him [de Surville] to arm a vessel, as others had been allowed to do.' see 'Extrait du Journal d'un Voiage fait sur le Vaisseau le St. Jean Baptiste, version 4.JJ.143/23 dated 4 October 1771, p.1. H.F.Buffet in his 'Voyage à la découverte du port-louisien Surville,' p.8, considers that the directors of the Company also 'entrusted to him at the same time their ship, the Saint Jean Baptiste'. The above-mentioned appeal supports Monneron by declaring that 'on his arrival in France, [de Surville] had a ship built which was named the Saint Jean Baptiste.' The Appellants could, however, have been kept purposely unaware of de Surville's approach to the directors of the Company.
(2) 'Appeal', folio 3.
(3) Although he became aware of Gallois in 1772, since he mentions the name in his Journal on the 27 August 1772.
(4) H.F.Buffet, 'Voyage à la découverte', p.27.

India, the de Laissaière brothers. (1) It was still not enough for what the main partners had in mind, and Guillaume Labé, who was engaged as second-in-command, was persuaded to invest 50,000 livres, a commission on all sales and purchases being allowed to him in addition to his normal emoluments. A cautious and prosaic man, inclined to melancholy, he was reluctant to part with his savings for such an enterprise: it was hazardous, and it contained an element of vagueness that was bound to worry him.

The intention was, apparently, to trade in eastern waters - d'Inde en Inde as Monneron puts it - probably between the French settlements in India and China where profitable operations could be carried out, as well as between other European and native ports from South Africa to Malaya. But the situation ~~had~~ altered when a rumour spread that a fabulously rich island had been discovered in the Pacific: the partners decided in consequence that the Saint Jean Baptiste would sail 'à la découverte.'

'Messrs Law, Chevalier and de Surville, who were the owners, intended to trade [with this ship] in Eastern waters, but they altered this plan on account of news which had spread about the discovery of an island in the South Sea by an English vessel. What came to their knowledge was so extraordinary that it deserved all their attention and, viewing this affair from a

(1) G. Labé, 'Journal du Saint Jean Baptiste', preliminary notes. Labé's spelling is erratic - he writes alternatively Delesaière and de Laissaière. Labé's notes indicate that the brothers were present at the interviews he had with the syndica

political point of view, they did not hesitate to complete their arrangements to forestall the English in case they were intending to make a second voyage to take possession of this island.' (1)

The Abbé Rochon, who was later, at the suggestion of Malesherbes, to give one of the few published accounts of the voyage, confirms this :

'I was in Pondicherry in August 1769 when the rumour spread that an English vessel had found in the South Sea a very rich island where, among other peculiarities, a colony of Jews had been settled. The account which was published of this discovery became so well-known that it was believed in India that the purpose of de Surville's voyage, of which the main armateurs were Law, Governor of Pondicherry, and Chevalier, Governor of Chandernagor, was to search for this marvellous island.' (2)

'The love of the marvellous, common enough among travellers,' adds Monneron, may well have overstressed the advantages of the island but, even after allowing for exaggerations, a voyage there seemed well worth-while. It was not merely a question of pecuniary gains - there was also, as he was quick to point out, the desirability of adding such an attractive island to the depleted French Empire. (3) The obvious anxiety to forestall

(1) Monneron, 'Extrait du Journal', p. 2.
(2) Alexis Rochon, 'Voyages aux Indes Orientales,' p. 233. The account which was published can only refer to a local newspaper report, unless 'publia' is taken to mean 'made known' by word of mouth.' Monneron, op. cit., p. 3. states that the ship 'had hardly been built a year when the project was conceived.
(3) Monneron, Ibid., p. 2.

an English settlement reflects the political awareness of the French navigators, even those whose basic intention was to trade. De Surville's concern in this connection is similar to Bougainville's motives in occupying the Falkland Islands and, when this failed, in sailing into the Pacific Ocean.

Remained the problem of locating the new discovery. That was a matter on which there was, unfortunately, no reliable information. The island was rumoured to be 500 leagues off the coast of Peru, between the 27th and 28th degrees of latitude south, which was the latitude of Copiapo - called Copiago by Monneron. Copiapo is, strictly speaking a Chilean town, the present frontier between Peru and Chile being some 10 degrees further north, but Peru was the term in general use at the time, and was particularly useful when the writer wanted to evoke the idea of mineral wealth. This dubious connection was built up in order to make the new discovery more interesting, for, as we shall see, it was further argued that, since gold had been found in Peru, similar riches should be found in Pacific islands situated along the same parallels. There are unhappily no rich islands - indeed, practically no islands at all - in this latitude. Only San Felix, San Ambrosio, Sala-y-Gomez and Easter Islands, now Chilean possessions of limited value, the British islands of Pitcairn and Ducie and the French outpost of Rapa-iti can be encountered over a distance of 5000 miles and, of these, none is likely to have given rise to rumours of great wealth. Pitcairn had just been sighted by Carteret, and was

apparently uninhabited, so that it is quite unlikely that its discovery was reported in glowing terms - or even reported at all - to the French in India. Easter Island had been discovered by Roggeveen nearly fifty years before but, again, there had been no exaggerated report of its value.

In fact, there was nothing new about a mysterious land off the coast of Peru. Bougainville, as we have seen, briefly looked for it in 1768. Rumours about it had been current for nearly a century, for it was in 1687 that Edward Davis, in the Batchelor's Delight, had come across it. Davis left no record of his travels, but he had mentioned his discovery to William Dampier. The exact location remained in doubt, for the accounts given by Davis and by his surgeon Lionel Wafer are hard to reconcile with the position given by Dampier.

'Davis told me lately,' says Dampier, (1) 'that after his Departure from us at the Haven of Rea Lejo... he went, after several Traverses, to the Gallapagoes, and that, standing thence Southward for Wind, to bring him about Tierra del Fuego, in the Latitude of 27 South, about 500 leagues from Copayapo, on the Coast of Chile, he saw a small sandy Island just by him; and that they saw to the Westward of it a long Tract of pretty high Land, tending away toward the North West out of sight. This might probably be the Coast of Terra Australis Incognita.'

(1) A New Voyage round the World, (London, 1697.), p.352.

It was in the last sentence that the key lay to the importance attached to Davis Land: there had been plenty of non-existent islands on the maps of the world, but few of them evoked more than the fleeting interest of geographers and navigators: Davis Land, on the other hand, lay in that region of the Pacific where the Southern Continent could be expected to be found - and Terra Australis had become endowed in the imagination of many with truly fabulous wealth. Thus it was that in Davis Land the imaginary riches of the fifth continent mingled with the gold and silver mines of the Spanish Empire. Monneron expressed this line of thought clearly when he commented that 'it was a natural thing to believe that it was much richer than the other countries, because it was situated some 700 leagues west of the coast of Peru and by the southern latitude of 27 to 28 degrees, which is that of Copiago where the Spanish obtain gold in enormous quantities.(1)'

Wishful thinking could go no further. And yet, if Monneron, or any of the partners who were prepared to risk up to three million livres on the gamble, had analysed Dampier's report,

(1) Monneron, 'Extrait du Journal,' p.2. R. McNab in 'Historical Records of New Zealand,' Vol.II, p.230 expressed doubts that Monneron kept a daily journal of his own, and wondered whether the clerk had not used other journals to compile his account. From the titles of the two accounts left by Monneron (Extrait du Journal and Rédaction Abrégée,) it is clear that he was drawing from another source, and there is no clear evidence that this was his own log.

he would have found a discrepancy between the route followed by Davis and the supposed position of his discovery. Lionel Wafer left no doubt in anyone's mind that the Batchelor's Delight had sailed south-south-east towards Juan Fernandez Island:

'Accordingly we went thence from the Galapagos again for the Southward, intending to touch no where till we came to the Island of John Fernando... we steered South and by East, half Easterly, until we came to the Latitude of 27 Deg. 20 Min. South when, about two Hours before Day, we fell in with a low sandy Island...'(1)

Now, anyone sailing from the Galapagos to Juan Fernandez would naturally set a south-easterly course, as Monneron would have realised had he been aware of even the bare outline of Davis' voyage. Even tacking against the south-east trade winds, and struggling against the current, would not have brought the Englishmen to a point that was more westerly than their point of departure. When the French astronomer Alexandre Pingré came to examine this voyage, he reached the conclusion that Davis could not, by following the course he claimed to have set himself, have reached a point that was 500 leagues from the South American Coast.

'From this course, it follows that the islands discovered by Davis must be more easterly than the 292nd meridian. Now

(1) L. Wafer, A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America, (L. E. E. Joyce, ed.) p.125.

the islands of San Felix are shown on the maps of Don Juan and of Don de Ulloa as being by 297 and a half degrees of longitude. On the contrary, if Davis' islands were 500 leagues from Copiapo, this town being situated by 306 degrees of longitude, the position of the small island would be 278 degrees and a half and therefore much further west than the Galapagoes and than the point of departure...It must therefore be recognised that either Wafer, or his copyist or his printer, let slip a misprint and that the small island is not 500 leagues

was just beginning his Pacific voyage, in February 1768, Wallis arrived at Capetown. News of his discovery would thus have reached India by the middle of the year at the latest, that is soon after de Surville arrived in the Ganges in the Saint Jean Baptiste. The reports from Capetown, which may have reached the French second-hand from the Ile de France, had become so magnified by the time they reached the French settlements in India that de Surville and his partners felt it unwise to delay their departure. Waiting for more details would only give the English the opportunity to despatch a ship back to the Pacific to take possession of the island or, at any rate, to spoil a most promising market.(1)

The belief that the French were led into the Pacific by Wallis' discovery can be justified by comparing Rochon's statement that a colony of Jews was reputed to live on the mysterious island, with the report of George Robertson, master of the Dolphin, that white-skinned people were to be found in Tahiti:

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(1) Wallis arrived in England towards the end of May 1768. This would hardly have left enough time for rumours to reach India and the French in time for them to prepare for the long voyage beginning March 1769. Reports might have filtered through from Batavia where the Dolphin had made its first call, but de Surville's own officers believed the discoverers had called at Davis Land - 'prior to their departure ~~from~~ for the Cape of Good Hope'- without apparently any knowledge of the call at Batavia. See B.G.Corney, The Voyage of Captain Don Felipe Gonzalez to Easter Island 1770-1, p.lxi, quoting the report of the Viceroy of Peru to his superiors in Madrid on the de Surville expedition.

'This Race of White people in my opinion has a great resemblance to the Jews, which are Scaterd through all the knowen parts of the Earth.' (1)

But the rumours did not include any specific details, and none certainly about the position of Tahiti - which is likely enough if one assumes that the officers of the Dolphin observed, when in Capetown, the discretion that was incumbent upon them, while the less informed sailors romanced in the taverns on the riches of the island, the true geographical position of which they totally ignored. It will be seen that de Surville made no attempt to follow a route that would have taken him near Tahiti.

The French, therefore, fell victim to a double misapprehension - firstly that Tahiti was wealthy, and secondly that it was Davis Land. The former error is easier to understand, for voyagers are prone to exaggeration, and Tahiti was certainly not without its attractions, as Bougainville had already discovered for himself, but why Davis' mythical land should have been resurrected at this juncture is less clear. True, its existence was generally believed in at the time, but there is no apparent reason why the French should not have believed that the English had discovered a hitherto totally unknown island - as indeed they had done. The name of Davis may have been brought up quite spontaneously in the

(1) 'The Discovery of Tahiti,' (ed. Hugh Carrington,) p. 228. See also R. McNab, 'From Tasman to Marsden,' pp. 33-4. The rumoured existence of a race of Jews in New Guinea, 'suspected to be a Remnant of the Ten Tribes of Israel', was mentioned 25 years earlier in John Campbell's map of Dampier's discoveries in New Guinea; see, The Journals of Captain Cook, (Ed. J. C. Beaglehol vol. I, p. lxxvii, fn. Imaginary Israelites in the Pacific were therefore nothing new.

discussions that were held in India between Chevalier, Law and de Surville, but it is equally possible that the French were the victims of a misunderstanding on the part of whichever French agent had sent the report from Capetown. A Frenchman will pronounce the names Wallis and Davis fairly similarly. Receiving on the one hand a fanciful report on the Dolphin's voyage, and on the other - perhaps from another agent - the news that the extraordinary island had been discovered by an Englishman whose name sounded like Davis, the three partners would understandably become confused.

This in turn explains why they took no notice of Bougainville's voyage. It would be strange if the syndicate in India had received no reports about the voyage of the Boudeuse and of the Etoile, which had called at the Ile de France in November 1768. It can be presumed that, by early 1769, news of the expedition must have reached India, yet no mention is made by Rochon of any rumours concerning a French ship, nor does any mention appear in any of the journals of the Saint Jean Baptiste, apart from Monneron's in which a marginal note, which could be a later interpolation, briefly refers to Bougainville. It can only be surmised that reports were received , but that de Surville was unimpressed because no riches had been found. If he had already identified Wallis' discovery with Davis Land, this would have strengthened his resolve not to be deviated from a search for treasure by reports of another island where the natives were friendly, but poor.

Whatever was said on these various points at the meetings held between the three main partners was not communicated to the other investors. Labé, whose 50,000 livres should have entitled him to some indication of what was planned, was kept in ignorance right to the end.(1) It was not customary, however, for the officers and men to be informed of the aims of a voyage and, in this particular case, secrecy was of paramount importance if the British were to be forestalled. Yet, at the same time, it was not easy to explain away the extensive and hurried preparations.

'It was announced in India that only trade with Manilla, China and Batavia was intended, but preparations as considerable as those which were being made announced an extraordinary voyage.' (2)

There was, officially, food enough for three years, (3) although it was a claim that Labé would have bitterly contested. 'I do not know who was in charge of our fitting out in Bengal,' he wrote, 'but what is certain is that they are an ignorant lot.'(4) Not only was the Saint Jean Baptiste sailing towards a mirage, but she appeared to have been hastily constructed, and insufficiently provisioned for a long and hazardous journey, although she may have been quite adequate for her original purpose. It is doubtful whether much more could have been done by the syndicate,

(1) Labé, Journal, 1 March 1770. 'Last night, M.Surville informed me that we were going to try to discover the land seen by the traveller David, an Englishman, in the year 1686.'
(2) Monneron, Extrait du Journal, p.3.
(3) ibid., p.3.
(4) Labé, Journal, 23 April 1769. See also his entries of 5 May 1769 to 1 June 1769, containing his comments on the stay at Pondicherry.

because the total expenses were enormous. The cargo was rich and varied, enough to tempt the wealthy natives of Davis Land to part with all their gold and silver. As well as iron bars and opium and trade goods of all kinds, the French took on board Indian cloths, European gift articles, trinkets, knives, spices, Portuguese wine, muslin and lace; from Pondicherry they took more textiles as well as food supplies. The total reached two and a half million livres, so that, with the additional cost of building or chartering and of fitting out the ship, more than three millions were involved. The French livre was subject to frequent fluctuations as a result of wars and financial crises, but it was worth approximately 10d to 1/- towards the close of the eighteenth century. This would place the cost of the expedition at around £150,000, eighteenth century values. As Chevalier was not able to obtain in time all the goods he wanted, this total - based on Labé's estimate (1) - may not have been reached. Even so, if we bear in mind that Cook's voyage of 1768 cost less than £10,000 to fit out, we get an approximate idea of the capital invested in the Saint Jean Baptiste.

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(1) Labé, Journal, preliminary notes.

De Surville, on whom fell the responsibility of bringing the voyage to a successful end, was by then fifty-two years of age. He had an excellent record as a sailor and as a man; everything about him justified the trust which his partners had placed in him. He had been at sea since his early teens, and had first sailed to India at the age of twenty-three (1) in the Hercules. He was twice made prisoner by the British during the War of the Austrian Succession, had obtained his first command at the age of thirty-six and, when the Seven Years' War broke out, he had joined the squadron of the Comte d'Aché in the Indian Ocean. (2) He was wounded in 1758 and received the Cross of St. Louis, later being appointed to command the Centaure when its captain, who was his own brother René Louis (1710/~~17~~59), was killed off the coast of Coromandel.

The family had the closest connections with the French India Company. A relative of his mother's had been one of its Directors in pre-Law days: his brother spent his peace-time life in the Company's ships, and two of his brothers-in-law were also captains of the Company. (3)

An official citation (4) refers to him as a 'great sailor, very good soldier, fit for great things, active, witty, firm

(1) He was born in Port-Louis, Brittany, (not to be confused with Port Louis, the capital of the Ile de France,) in January 1717.

(2) Another in the same squadron was Marion du Fresne, who commanded the Diligente, 26 guns. For a list of the French participants in the naval campaign, many of whom were officers of the India Company, see H.C.M. Austin, 'Sea Fights and Corsairs of the Indian Ocean, being the Naval History of Mauritius from 1715 to 1810', (Mauritius, 1935.), pp. 24-7.

(3) Buffet, 'Voyage à la découverte', p. 3. His godfather Le Roux des Saudrais, was also a captain in the India Co.

(4) Buffet, ibid., p. 6n, quoting Archives des Colonies C2. 289 fo. 8.

and determined, a man attentive to details, who has commanded the King's ships with distinction.' To this, one might add that he was fond of his men, but, at the same time, somewhat given to sudden, short-lived, bursts of anger. Even Labé, whose journal is full of complaints, finds little to record against him, apart from disagreeing with him on navigational details; if anything, Labé condemns him for excessive leniency.

Labé himself was an able and dependable sailor; the syndicate were pleased to have him and determined to retain his services. De Surville shows on several occasions that he regarded him highly, both as a man and as a sailor. For his part, Labé very soon regretted the impulse that had made him accept (1), and fretted about his wife, whom he was not to see again for many years, and who was supposed to be receiving an allowance of one hundred rupees a month.

The second lieutenant was Jean Pottier de l'Horme, a serious man, whose personality does not stand out beyond that mere fact;(2) the first ensign or, more correctly, first sub-lieutenant, was Hughes Jean Marie de Surville, son of the captain's late brother René; the ship's clerk was Pierre Antoine Monneron. With the exception of young de Surville, who proved unsatisfactory after his uncle's death had freed him from supervision, all these kept journals of which copies were later deposited in French naval archives.

(1) e.g. Comments of 14 July 1769 and his introductory notes.
(2) He was possibly a descendant of Joseph Pottier, Sieur des Ormes, second-in-command on the Grande Reine D'Espagne which carried out a circumnavigation in 1711-14. Pottier the younger's name is spelt in various ways, namely Delorme and de l'Orme, but the spelling in his own journal is de l'Horme.

Apart from Labé, it was Monneron who played the main part in bringing the ship back to France. His personality remains elusive; he may have had certain connections with the French India Company, for his father had married a relative of Dupleix, and there was at that time a Monneron who was a member of the Conseil Supérieur de Pondicherry (1). Certainly Monneron enjoyed the confidence of his captain, and after de Surville's death Labé also depended a great deal on this young man - for Monneron was only twenty-two when the St. Jean Baptiste sailed from Pondicherry. In fact, Pierre Monneron was an able man, who was to be for a time a member of the Constituent Assembly, and who, in spite of these republican leanings, was a personality impressive enough to be granted by others a nobiliary particle to which he was not entitled. (2) Another Monneron was to sail in 1788 with La Pérouse, and it is not surprising that historians have sometimes confused the two (3); it was, however, a younger brother Paul who accompanied La Pérouse, as he had done on previous occasions, notably on the famous Hudson's Bay raid of 1782.

The Saint Jean Baptiste ~~had~~ sailed from Bengal (4) on March 1769 for Yanaon, another French settlement in India, where a further 35 bales of textiles and some bullocks and kids were

(1) Le Gentil de la Galaisière, Voyages dans les Mers des Indes, vol. I, p. 33. This was, however, more probably a member of the banking family of that name.
(2) It was J.B. de Laborde who referred to him as Pierre de Monneron in his Histoire Abrégée de la Mer du Sud, vol. II, p. I.
(3) As did Corney in his Voyage of Don Felipe Gonzalez, Introduction, p. liv. n.
(4) With a detachment of 23 soldiers from the Pondicherry garrison, commanded by Captain de St. Paul. The crew numbered 114 Europeans, mostly Bretons, and over 30 lascars from India and slaves from Madagascar and Mauritius.

taken on board, but the Mahrattas were restless, and the district considered itself threatened by them. Circumstances being thus unpropitious to the French, de Surville sailed south to Masulipatam and to Pondicherry, the main French port. There firewood and water were added to the cargo together with more trade goods. It was here, too, that the soldiers, many of whom were to die on the voyage, were added to the complement.

In the early hours of June 2, the Saint Jean Baptiste sailed from Pondicherry, and set a course to the SSE. Favoured by the monsoon winds, the ship completed the crossing to the Nicobar Islands in eight days; this was, if anything, too swift, because de Surville had intended to call there to ascertain whether, as was rumoured, the Danes had settled on the islands - but the islands were sighted at dawn on June IO, and the Saint Jean Baptiste was already to leeward, and unable to stop.(1)

Soon the French were in the Straits of Malacca, beginning a painful struggle against winds and tides. The ship had taken eight days to cover the more than LOOO miles from Pondicherry to the Nicobars, but another nineteen days passed before the next stage, 700 miles away, was reached. This was Malacca itself, where the Dutch governor accorded the expedition a mixed and fickle welcome. The French had given a nine-gun salute, but the fortress had returned only seven: it was a

(1) Monneron, 'Extrait du Journal', p.5.

slight to their flag which they had to bear with good grace. Personal courtesies were then extended to the officers, and de Surville was invited to use the facilities of the port to repair the bar of the rudder, which had split; then a British ship, China-bound from India, arrived on July 10, and within a very short time the governor's attitude towards the French had cooled considerably. The Dutchman had been told by the British captain, and by a Portuguese traveller, 'M. Caravaillo, an Englishman at heart, and as jealous as they are of anything that we may undertake', (1) that it was rumoured in India that the Saint Jean Baptiste was contemplating contraband, if not an outright raid, in the Dutch East Indies. The governor was naturally concerned lest reports of the assistance he had given to potential enemies should reach the ears of his superiors. There was, however, little more that de Surville could do in Malacca, and, on July 14 he left. M. Caravaillo, the French noted, had left a half hour earlier, having forsaken his Portuguese ship for the hospitality of the British one.

No sooner had they sailed that the expedition nearly came to an untimely end - the steward had dropped a burning candle in a barrel of alcohol, and only the presence of mind and courage of the boatswain saved the ship. (2)

(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 14 July 1769.
(2) Pottier de l'Horme, 'Journal du Voyage du Tour du Monde fait par le Sieur Pottier de l'Horme, Lt. des Vaux de la Cie des Indes,' Entry of 14 July 1769. Monneron, Extrait du Journal,' p. 7.

On the 19th, the Saint Jean Baptiste emerged into the South China Sea, and made for the island of Pulau Tioman, where she dropped anchor three days later. It was an unfortunate stay, for, although water and food were obtained, the anchor which had got wedged in some coral could not be saved in spite of every effort.(1) It was Trengannu that the French were now trying to reach, as they had been told that the local sultan would welcome them and supply all their needs, something which a British vessel - India-bound, this one - which they met on the 25th, confirmed for them. The English officer who paid a courtesy call on de Surville made it clear that D'Après' manual (2), which the French were using, was erroneous in respect of this area and, thanks to his explanation, they were soon able to sail into the estuary of the Trengannu river. The scenery was magnificent, and the local authorities were most cooperative, although the town itself did not impress the French, who were accustomed to more substantial buildings than the rough wooden huts built on piles eight to nine feet

(1) Pottier, op.cit., 25 July 1769. De Surville, 'Journal', 25 July 1769.

(2) D'Après's 'Neptune Oriental', first published in 1745, was the standard French work for navigation in Indian and Chinese waters. Born in 1707, Nicolas Denis de Blangy, Sieur de Manevillette, had gone to India in 1719 with his father, and had returned to Paris in 1721 to study under the famous geographer, Guillaume Delisle. He began work on his Neptune in 1735. According to Fleurieu, de Surville's log was in d'Après' hand until his death, when it was handed over to the naval archives; 'Découvertes des François en 1768 et 1769 dans le Sud Est de la Nouvelle Guinée', p.98n.

high, and reached by means of bamboo ladders, that made up the sultan's capital.(1)

De Surville bought supplies of fruit, eggs and cattle from the local Malays in exchange for knives and opium(2) and Labé was able, for the first and last time, to earn a substantial commission on the trading done there,(3) although this did not prevent him from complaining about the captain's preference for buffaloes.

'I was forgetting to say that the captain preferred to take buffaloes because they are big rather than good average-size bullocks. There's a fine blunder; the buffaloes will not keep, they will all die, and we will find ourselves without fresh food. Bullocks, on the contrary, keep very well on board ship, but he wanted to have his own way. Since we left Bengal all the sheep have nearly died [sic] on account of the shortage of food; there are only six or seven left on board, and they will follow the others.'(4)

For their hosts, the French had nothing but praise.

'We have been perfectly received, and foreigners are accorded all manner of courtesies and assistance from the king here, who is also king of Malacca whence he is always yearning to expel the Dutch. Our European ships could not find a better port of call.'(5)

(1) Labe, 'Journal', 29 July 1769. 'Dégoutant' comments Pottier.
(2) France did not lose her right to trade in opium until the peace of 1815.
(3) A detailed statement appears in de Surville's Journal, entry of 2 August 1769.
(4) Labé, 'Journal,' 1 August 1769. Labé is not quite fair, for de Surville had taken on board 18 heads of cattle and only 17 buffaloes, but, as Pottier noted, the buffaloes started to die even before the Saint Jean Baptiste sailed.
(5) De Surville, 'Journal', 29 July 1769.

Monneron adds details of the potential value of Trengannu as a trading port for French vessels.

'You will there a great quantity of calin (1) pepper and wax, rattan and some gold; all this can be exchanged against opium, iron, red, green and purple cloth, sail cloth and fine Calicut handkerchiefs, thin and light black cloth commonly called voile which the natives use for mourning, iron guns firing balls of one half to four pounds, good musquets, saltpetre, sulphur and gunpowder; all these articles can be sold to advantage.' (2)

The Saint Jean Baptiste left Trengannu in the evening of 1 August 1769, sailing north-east by east towards Pulo Condore, which was sighted six days later. The ship was now on a course that would take it to northern Luzon, and thence into the Pacific. The crossing of the China Seas was uneventful, in spite of frequent troublesome showers. During the afternoon of the 8th, a sail was seen far away to the ENE, presumably travelling in the opposite direction , as by midday on the following day it was SSE; it was seen briefly by some during the early part of the morning of the 10th, then no more - it was the last ship they were to see for seven months.

At this stage, the pretence of trade in the China Seas was abandoned, for the French neither veered east towards Manila,

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(1) A metal alloy consisting mostly of tin, used for tea-caddies in the Far East.

(2) Monneron, Journal du Voyage sur le Vaisseau le St Jean Baptiste, Rédaction Abrégée, p.10.

nor northwest towards Canton, but made instead for the Bashi Channel between Luzon and Formosa. The Philippines themselves were sighted on 17 Agust - distant mountains at first, then Cape Bojeador, the northwesternmost point of the island; soon after, a number of islands appeared to the north-east - the Babuyan Islands. On August 21, the Saint Jean Baptiste anchored off the Bashi Islands,(1) today known as the Batan Islands, a lonely group more than 100 miles distant from both Formosa and Luzon. The hope was that the Bashis would provide water and more food, for, as Labé had noted, the supplies taken on board in India would not suffice for a long voyage. Water, however, was not easy to obtain, and the islanders' other resources were limited.

The natives, quiet and friendly, if rather dirty and unattractive by European standards, could not have been more helpful. They brought pigs to the ships, sometimes travelling over a mile to get them to the shore, and exchanging them for a knife or a bottle of wine. To speed matters and to shorten his stay, de Surville decided to trust them, and to pay in advance for pigs that he hoped would be brought to him: he found them completely trustworthy.

(1) The older spelling 'Bashee' is still found today.

Indeed, although the islands were poor, and the life of the people was a hard one, the Bashis appeared pleasant enough. Labé counted some 72 canoes surrounding the ship, bringing potatoes, yams, pigs, and quantities of the local liquor bashi, after which Dampier had named the islands. (1)

'The crew,' wrote Labé, 'had drunk so much of this liquor during the day that they were all inebriated by the time we returned on board.'(2) This local drink, so Monneron states, inspired a 'joie douce and satisfaisante' (3), although he is careful to add that it impaired reasoning powers. Pottier de l'Horme, usually reserved in his comments, reports that it tasted like 'cider of mediocre quality.' (4) Therefore, when on the eve of their departure they found three sailors missing, they presumed that intemperance was the cause, and that the men were sleeping ashore. (5) De Surville was soon disabused when he learned that their belongings had also disappeared. (6) In no mood to suffer desertion so early in the voyage, (7) he asked the natives to give up the three men, but they, misunderstanding him, brought him three pigs.

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(1) Dampier's account will be found in A New Voyage round the World, (London, 1697), pp. 421-40.
(2) Labé, 'Journal', 25 August 1769.
(3) Monneron, 'Rédaction Abrégée', p. 15.
(4) Pottier, 'Journal', p. 69.
(5) Pottier, 'Journal', 22-23 August 1769.
(6) De Surville, 'Journal', 21 August 1769. Monneron believed that traditions about the good treatment accorded to some of Dampier's sailors who stayed behind on the Bashis were responsible for the desertions. Monneron, 'Extrait du Journal', pp. 25-6.
(7) One man, of Malay descent, had already deserted in Pulau Tioman De Surville, 'Journal', 25 July 1769. Labé states that this man was a native of Batavia, ~~Labé~~, 'Journal', 25 July 1769.

'They saw that I was displeased, which puzzled them. They then hastened to bring me the remainder of the pigs which they owed me and asked me whether this was satisfactory by using the word 'Mapia' which means good, but I at once signified that it was not, and I showed them three sailors, making signs to indicate that they had run away, and that they had to bring them back.'

All was in vain, and he ordered some two dozen islanders to be arrested out of the number on board, the others fleeing back to their canoes. He then spent some more time trying to explain what was required, and released all but six. They seemed to understand, going so far as to ask for rope, which the French believed was to be used to bind the prisoners, but his efforts were useless. It is probable indeed that the natives did not even know of the desertions, so that the captain's increasingly impatient signs were utterly incomprehensible.

'At last, seeing that I was only wasting my time, which was all the more precious because I had not been able to obtain any water in these islands, I decided to release three of the six islanders I had retained. I gave them each a length of cloth, and they hailed a boat which came to take them off.' (1)

He gave shirts and pants to the three remaining islanders to console them and, having been delayed twenty-four hours

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(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 21 August 1769.

longer than he intended, sailed into the Pacific.

The Bashi kidnapping is an episode of some importance in estimating de Surville's character, for two other similar charges will be laid against him later on the voyage. It would be easy to state simply that he kept the three men in a fit of rage, to revenge himself because he considered the islanders guilty of having assisted the desertion of his own three Breton sailors. (1) He kept them, in fact, for a double purpose - to learn more about their island, and as replacements for the deserters. It was his intention to return them to their island on his way back (2), for, as Labé states, it was part of his plan to come back 'to the Manillas, China and Batavia and return to Pondicherry', (3) after their discoveries in the Pacific. Even if this had proved impracticable at the end of the present voyage, it would have been possible later, since it was the intention of the syndicate to continue trading normally in eastern waters, after the original plan of discovery had been carried out.

To counteract the impression, easily gained, that de Surville had behaved in a manner as callous as that of the 'blackbirders' who later plagued the Pacific, it must be pointed that the Bashi Islanders were well treated on board - probably better, in fact, than the average sailor of the time. As the ship sailed away from their native land, de Surville,

(1) R. McNab, 'From Tasman to Marsden,' p. 41.
(2) Monneron, 'Rédaction Abrégée', p. 23.
(3) Labé, 'Journal', Preliminary Notes. This represents Labé's theory of what the voyage would have involved had it been allowed to proceed from Lima.

noticing their sorrow, sought to console them with gifts so that 'they began to laugh, saying 'Mapia', which means that this was good'.(1) It is an attitude hardly typical of the average eighteenth century sea-captain, for this was an age when negroes in their thousands were being ferried to slavery from Africa under appalling conditions, and when the European poor themselves often fell victim to the kidnappings of the press-gangs. Viewed against the general background of the eighteenth century - as indeed it must be - de Surville's conduct towards the natives he took away, from the Bashis, from the Solomons and from New Zealand, was far from inhuman.(2)

After leaving the Batans, the Saint Jean Baptiste sailed ESE on a course that would lead either to the Palau or to the Yap Islands. But where, in fact, were they making for? It was something that Labé, with his investment of 50,000 livres, would have liked to know, but which his sense of discipline prevented him from querying:

'It appears that M. de Surville wants to keep a course for the South, so as to cross the Line and carry out discoveries in that area....I expected that he would have asked my opinion on the route to be followed, since I am partly in charge of the operations jointly with him, but until now he has not mentioned the slightest thing, so that if there is some manoeuvre to be carried out later, either on account of a shortage of food and water or death or

(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 21 August 1769.
(2) Two of the Bashis Islanders died of scurvy, the other reached Lima.

illness among the crew, I wash my hands of it. The owners will have nothing to reproach me with, since I have not been consulted on the slightest thing.' (1)

Labé was very worried; the care of the crew and the supervision of the general running of the ship, which were part of his duties as second-in-command, were not made any easier by the knowledge that food stocks were inadequate. This had been brought home forcibly to him even before they had reached the Bashi Islands, for, when the surgeon had asked for a ration of chicken for the sick who had already begun to report to him, the captain had decided that poultry would be reserved for them, and would no longer be served to the officers. 'We reckon that this is a jest on the part of our captain,' the second-in-command, who was fond of his food, had commented, (2) but he was soon disabused. 'I had thought that it was a joke, this chicken business, the day before we arrived at the Bashis. But I see that it is in real earnest, and that our captain is keeping his word, because from that time not a single item of poultry has been served at our table.' (3) De Surville, indeed, was fully aware of the dangers that he faced with insufficient supplies on a voyage into the unknown. He knew how vague were the rumours that had sent him combing the waters of the Pacific for an unspecified period; he was not a ruthless man, and, once

(1) Labé, 'Journal', 26 August 1769.
(2) Ibid., 17 August 1769.
(3) Ibid., 9 September 1769.

he had turned from the known shipping lanes of the East, he must have had misgivings about the fate of the men under his care.

Labé feared that the Saint Jean Baptiste might become trapped in the equatorial calms, as indeed she was. The then unknown and confusing currents that were dragging her off course made longitude a matter of sheer guesswork. In addition, the point of departure from the Batans was wrong.(1) Not only that, but their charts were old and unreliable. On September 7 Labé worked out that, according to the chart he was using, he was in the middle of the Carolines. 'This map is worth nothing at all,' he comments.(2) Pottier, a week earlier, had worked out his position as being only a few leagues from 'an island called Matelotte',(3) but nothing was in sight. Was he in fact just north-west of the Palau Islands, as was his belief? He had no means of telling. Three days later, he estimated himself to be sailing over the area where Caprisan Island was reputed to be. 'It must be believed that it does not exist, or that I have a considerable difference west, for there is no sign of land.' (4)

(1) They were using Dampier's longitude of nearly a century before, which was approximately 3° out. See W. Dampier, A new Voyage round the World, vol. I, p421.
(2) Labé, 'Journal', 7 September 1769. His estimated longitude was 131°52' east of Paris; de Surville's was 129°31.
(3) Pottier, 'Journal', 1 Sept. 1769. The correct name is Matelotas.
(4) Ibid, 4 September 1769. There is an Arakabesan Island in the Palau Group. On Vaugondy's map in De Brosses's book Caprisan is shown slightly to the east of Yap Is., in approximately 9½° south and 132° east.

The captain himself was no wiser. He was fairly certain of his observations as to latitude, but his longitude, as he well knew, was quite hopeless.

'I do not know where the currents have taken me. I think it is to the north-east. I am not reducing any of my readings: they are not worth it. I observed 8°18' at midday - that makes six leagues that I have lost northwards. As far as my longitude is concerned, I am not altering it, for fear of altering it the wrong way.' (1)

Since struggling with the charts was of little use, they spent their time looking for the sailors' traditional signs of land - floating branches, seaweed, fruit, birds. Labé's pessimism was given full rein when, towards the latter part of September, they reached the Equator, and the capricious winds began to die down. In his ill-humour, he suspected de Surville of not even trying to land in the Western Carolines,(2) something that was quite unfair; for the captain had indeed hoped, though in vain, to land at St. Andrews Islands, (3) which can be presumed to have been his target after his departure from the Batans. With haphazard navigation based on erroneous longitudes, an exact landfall was out of the question; what Labé really resented was de Surville's highhanded attitude in refusing to discuss his plans with him.

(1) De Surville, 'Journal',7 September 1769.
(2) Labé, 'Journal',9 September 1769.
(3) De Surville, 'Journal',10 September 1769. St. Andrews, today known as Sonserol Islands, are south-west of the Caroline group.

'Here we are partly under the Line, and very little wind, nearly still; (1) God knows when we shall have enough wind to get ourselves out of these parts. There is only a 70 days' supply of water left. Our men are beginning to suffer a lot from the heat and thirst, and several are attacked by scurvy. I do not know what M. de Surville intends to do, since he has never talked to me of these matters of discovery. I do not know what to think of him, whether it is ill-humour on his part.' (2)

Three days later, they had crossed the Equator, and matters were not improving.

'Here we are, in these notorious doldrums. God knows when we shall get out of them.' Our crew is suffering a great deal from the heat, and they have only their bottle of water to drink each twenty-four hours and, if the calms continue, we shall be forced to reduce their drink. I am really worried that sickness will affect them - I mean by that scurvy. Already we have several [cases], and a large part of the crew are complaining of pains in the stomach, the first symptom of scurvy. God grant that we may soon discover some land or islands to get water, and to carry out the discoveries which are the aim of our voyage. M. de Surville will get out of it the best he can. If I had counted for anything in this, and if my advice had been

(1) 'You could call it dead calm,' wrote de Surville of the same afternoon. 'Journal', 24 September 1769.
(2) Labé, 'Journal', 23 September 1769.

asked, I would have been in favour of beginning our discoveries in northern latitudes, and of sailing in the Caroline and New Philippine Islands, where surely we would have found large quantities of food of all description at gunpoint.'(1)

Although the set course was SE by E, the breeze was so weak that the ship sometimes would not obey the rudder, and drifted until the bow was pointing to WSW.(2) As a result, when a heavy sea got up at the end of September - for the expedition was by then passing the opening between the Admiralty Islands and New Ireland - the ship could not face it and rolled helplessly.(3) There were other matters of concern: de Surville feared that the monsoonal change, the equinox, and the new moon at the end of the month might bring him more problems: he was not looking forward to what October might bring.(4) However, as he left the Equator, the breeze became stronger, but, since he had no idea where they were, it was still necessary to sail with caution at night.

Finally, on the morning of 7 October, the French saw a coastline stretching from south-east to west-south-west. The nearest land appeared to be an island, some 6 or 7 leagues to SE by S¼, with low land beyond; to this they gave the name of

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(1) Labé, Journal, 26 September 1769. Labé here shows no sign of being aware of rumours about Davis Land or Tahiti.
(2) De Surville, Journal, 27 September 1769
(3) ibid., 29 September 1769.
(4) ibid., 1 October 1769.

'Ile de la Première Vue.' The horizon was not clear enough for them to distinguish the various indentations of the coastline, but they noticed a long chain of mountains as far as WSW, partly lost in the clouds.(1)

The question of what this land was could be left until they had dealt with the more pressing problem of finding an anchorage, where water and food could be obtained. It was not until the 13th that they came across one - a natural harbour formed by a group of small off-shore islands, which they named Port Praslin.(2) Unknowingly, they had reached the lost islands of Mendaña, the Solomons which had puzzled geographers for two centuries, along the south coast of which Bougainville had sailed the year before.

De Surville, it will be remembered, had hoped to land at St. Andrews Islands in early September. He had nearly succeeded in doing so - as far as can be ascertained from his unreliable longitudes - but he had sailed slightly too far north to find these tiny specks lost in an empty corner of the Western Pacific. He had then passed between them and the Palau Islands to the north; on September 13, having realised that he had missed his landfall, and being worried that he might find himself too close to the coast of New Guinea, at a time when he was in the doldrums and at the mercy of the monsoon change, he had altered course to the east;(3) indeed, although his observation

(1) Ibid., 7 October 1769.
(2) Not to be confused with Bougainville's harbour of the same name in New Ireland.
(3) Monneron, "Redaction Abrégée", p.26 'To avoid being embayed on the shore of New Guinea.'

on September 17 is perhaps incorrect, he appears to have sailed north-east for two days.(1) This had brought him in a wide sweep to the north of the Admiralty Islands, sailing only a few degrees south of east, until on the 22nd he considered it safe to set a clear course for the south-east.(2) Having crossed the Line somewhere around the 150th degree of longitude east of Greenwich, he continued to sail roughly south-east: this course had led him along the northern coast of New Ireland, although he was just too far off to see land: he might have sighted Bougainville Island, but, as it happened, the first week of October was overcast, with frequent showers, and visibility was very restricted. When land was finally seen, it was only some twenty miles away.

Such a route - amounting to a direct south-easterly course(3) from the point at which they can be presumed to have crossed the Equator - would have brought the Saint Jean Baptiste to Choiseul Island, which would thus be the 'Ile de Première Vue' seen to the SE by S. (4) The mountains which they saw stretching to WSW were the north-west coast of the island.

De Surville had hoped to land right away in a bay on the coast of Choiseul but, seeing 'the sea breaking everywhere between the small islands', he decided against it (5) and on 8 October he sailed ENE.

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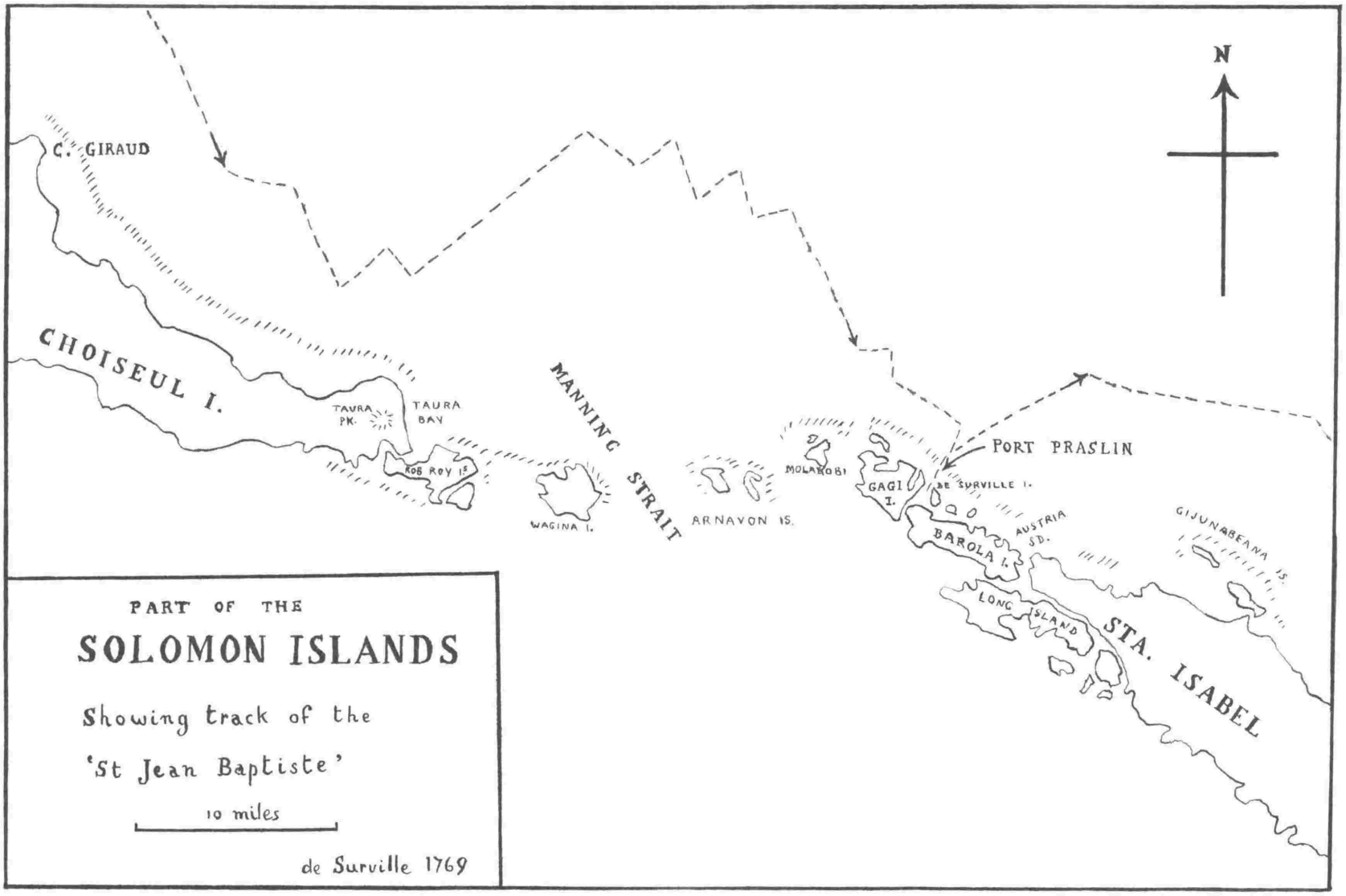
(1) De Surville, Journal, Entries of 18 and 19 September 1769.
(2) Monneron, op.cit., p.26.
(3) The course from 24 September to 3 October (ESE) is compensated for by the route from 4 October (SSE).
(4) A 'Gros Morne' or high bluff appeared to be the westernmost point of an immense bay, according to Monneron, Rédaction Abrégée, p.29. This would be the central headland of northern Choiseul, Cape Giraud.
(5) De Surville, Journal, 8 October 1769.


N
C. GIRAUD
CHOISEUL I.
TAURA PK.
TAURA BAY
ROB ROY IS
WAGINA I.
MANNING STRAIT
ARNAVON IS.
MOLAKOBI
GAGI I.
PORT PRASLIN
DE SURVILLE I.
BAROLA I.
AUSTRIA SD.
LONG ISLAND
STA. ISABEL
GIJUNABEANA IS.
PART OF THE
SOLOMON ISLANDS
Showing track of the
'St Jean Baptiste'
10 miles
de Surville 1769

Nº 5

He was not certain whether this land that he had discovered was a labyrinth of islands or a 'continent', but he inclined towards the second alternative. In consequence, he believed that it was unwise to venture so close in as to become trapped in a deep bay - 'un grand enfoncement dans le dit continent' (1) - which was in all probability the wide bay that constitutes the north-east coast of Choiseul. On 9 October, he also saw a 'terrible gulf or perhaps a passage between two groups of islands' (2) - Manning Strait, between Choiseul and Santa Ysabel islands. The winds were not constant enough for him to sail close to the shore, for at times the breeze fell away completely, while on the 11th it started to rain, and visibility fell sharply. A reliable charting of the coastline - and therefore a positive identification of the first landfall - was out of the question: it needed far more time than de Surville, with his weakened and sick crew, could spare and, anyhow, his aim was to trade, and not to explore. Either aim stood little chance of fulfillment until his men could be refreshed: they were now in such a condition that he endeavoured to simplify the manoeuvres, and to anticipate the squalls which added to their discomfort. (3)

Thus Port Praslin, where they anchored on 13 October, after Labé had investigated it in the yawl, cannot be pin-pointed

(1) Ibid., 9 October 1769.
(2) Ibid., 10 October 1769. The empty space stretched between an island to the ESE, which was the easternmost land (off the western point of Santa Ysabel), and the SSE, which would be the eastern point of Choiseul, Taura Peak.
(3) De Surville, 'Journal', 12 October 1769.

with absolute certainty. It was less a natural harbour than a shelter formed by several off-shore islands. Traditionally, it is the channel separating Gagi Island, off Santa Ysabel, from two other small islands now called Marianne and de Surville. Although there are a number of such off-shore reefs and islands where the Saint Jean Baptiste could have sheltered, it is a tradition that can remain unchallenged.

The problem of finding water was complicated by the number of islanders who were found to be living around Port Praslin. The French endeavoured to show their peaceful intentions by gifts and gestures, the chaplain contributing a bottle of brandy; but the natives, spurning this clerical gift from an outside civilisation, poured the contents into the sea, and kept the bottle.(1) At the same time, de Surville ordered precautions to be taken, including the loading of the guns.(2) Eventually, the islanders were persuaded to clamber aboard; their painted appearance was ferocious, and they proved to be enthusiastic thieves, but the French by dint of patience succeeded in impressing on them their need for water.

Two boats were lowered, one under Labé, the other under young de Surville. They were led first to a shallow part of the harbour, where they were in danger of grounding, then to

(1) Pottier, 'Journal', 13 October 1769.
(2) Monneron, 'Extrait du Journal', p.38.

a second cove, but no water was in sight. The natives, assembled to the number of some one hundred and fifty, insisted that it would be found a little further inland. Labé sent the sergeant with three soldiers, who managed, though not without difficulty, to find two bucketfuls. Meanwhile the islanders were endeavouring to persuade the sailors to disperse along the shore, and they even began to pull the boats towards the beach. Labé, therefore, decided to withdraw from what he was beginning to suspect was an ambush but, as soon as they realised his intention, the natives attacked. The sergeant, already weak from a mild sunstroke he had suffered ashore a few moments earlier, was mortally injured while others, including Labé, were struck by stones and lances. The French fired on the attackers, who fled, leaving about thirty of their number killed or wounded. (1)

De Surville was greatly incensed at this treachery - he mentions it many times - and he realised that no cooperation could be expected from the natives. Yet the need for water and, if possible, for food, was growing daily. He resolved to capture some of the islanders to force them to reveal a place where supplies could be obtained, but this was not easy to do and, after a fruitless chase across a boggy stretch of jungle, it

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(1) Labé, "Journal", 14 October 1769. De Surville, "Journal", 14 October 1769. Other accounts are given by Pottier and Monneron.

became evident that only a ruse would succeed. Two negroes from Madagascar were accordingly disguised as Solomon Islanders, and sent out on a captured native canoe. They managed to approach two youths, one of whom was killed, and the other captured.

'Being young...he will learn French; then we will be able to get many details on their customs and on what the country produces... M. de Surville intends to take particular care of him, so as to take him to France where he can be presented to our Navy ministers...as an inhabitant of the port which we have named after the Minister of the Navy.'(1)

The youth, unaware of the great future planned for him, served their immediate purpose, and showed the French a stream which enabled them to renew their stocks of water.(2) They remained a further six days in Port Praslin, unmolested by the natives, who had been beaten off after a second attack on October 16. The sick had been landed to get the benefit of the 'land air', but torrential rains actually worsened their condition. On the 21st, the Saint Jean Baptiste sailed from Port Praslin: her crew had little but bitter memories to take with them.

De Surville gave to the land he had discovered the name of 'Terre des Arsacides', 'after the Arsacides commonly called Assassins'.(3) As a warning to those who might follow him, he

(1) Labé, 'Journal', 14 October 1769. The Praslin was the same Duc de Praslin as Bougainville had honoured in a similar manner the year before.
(2) '196 barrels of water, a longboatful of firewood and about 100 palm-cabbages'. Labé, 'Journal', 20 October 1769.
(3) De Surville, 'Journal', 26 October 1769. He believed that Arsacides came from the word 'Asis' meaning 'a person who ambushes', and was thus appropriate, but the word actually derives from 'hashish'.

had carved on a tree the words 'Beware of the inhabitants of this place' (1). Nevertheless, in spite of his anger at the treachery of the islanders, he treated the captured youth, Lova Sarega, with kindness and even affection, having him at his own table, and encouraging him to learn French. De Surville's anger was never very long-lasting. In return, Lova showed himself helpful, honest and friendly, earning praise from all the officers. In time, the hope that he would provide information on the customs and beliefs of his people became fully justified.

By bestowing on the islands the name of Arsacides, de Surville showed that he did not identify them with Mendaña's discovery. With their inaccurate plotting of the route, and the sketchy charts at their disposal, the French were not even certain whether they had passed to the east or to the west of New Britain, which at the time was believed to include what we now know as New Ireland. (2) This uncertainty led de Surville to refer to the Arsacides as an extension of New Guinea, (3) and as the 'land of the Papuans'. (4) However, he began to feel in November that the Arsacides might have some connection

(1) Labé, 'Journal', 20 October 1769. There were several other notices carved on trees; they are listed by Pottier, 'Journal', p. 144.
(2) De Surville, 'Journal', 8 October 1769 and 10 October 1769. He added 'It is certain that, if what we are seeing has already been seen by someone, the charts are really wrong.'
(3) Ibid., 6 November 1769.
(4) Ibid., 7 November 1769

with the Solomons, possibly being an extension of that archipelago. (1)

Labé, for his part, did not think that there could be any doubt that they had sailed to the east of New Britain, (2) although this did not tell him what the land was that he had reached. He felt inclined to consider it as a chain, which in some way stretched from eastern New Guinea. 'We are all agreed,' he wrote, 'that all the continent that we have seen is nothing more than a mass of large islands, fringed by smaller ones, which make up this part of New Guinea.' (3) The agreement between the officers did not extend to the vexed question of whether they had passed to the west or to the east of New Britain, because it was raised again in November. Labé considered, with some justice, that it would have been impossible to sail through the comparatively narrow channel between New Guinea and New Britain without realising it.

Pottier de l'Horme agreed with Labé that they had sailed east of New Britain, but he inclined to the belief that they had re-discovered the coast of Espiritu Santo which was reputed to be a continent, and Pottier believed that the unknown land which they had just sighted was that continent. (4) Yet Pottier, quite out of the blue, expresses the opinion that de Surville had endeavoured to land at the Solomons: 'It appears,' he wrote

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(1) Ibid., 10 November 1769.
(2) Labé, 'Journal', 8 October 1769.
(3) Labé, 'Journal', 26 October 1769.
(4) Pottier, 'Journal', 10 October 1769.

that M. De Surville's aim is to reach the latitude of the Solomon Islands in order to stop there, and to restore them [his men], and to get what refreshments can be found there, because the crew is very tired of the sea.' (1) Apart from Monneron - whose account needs to be considered separately - Pottier is the only one to mention the Solomons in this way. It seems unreasonable that, if the captain was hoping to reach the Solomons, he did not at least consider the possibility that he might have got there. And yet Pottier is not prone to exaggerated or unsubstantiated statements. His comment is either a later interpolation or, at best, the result of idle shipboard speculation, for since the captain was not prepared to divulge his real plans his officers would naturally erect their own theories. One of these Pottier set down - and then promptly forgot.

Monneron, who compiled his first report in Lima, goes much further than any of the others. He shows awareness of Bougainville's voyage, and comes much closer to the target when he indentifies the Arsacides with the islands that the circumnavigator had seen the year before.

'One finds, however, in the voyage of M. de Bougainville that he sighted part of this same land.'(2)

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(1) Ibid., 6 October, 1769.
(2) Monneron, 'Extrait du Journal', marginal note on p. 35. The date of the 'Extrait' is 4 October 1771, by which time Bougainville's book had appeared in print.

He further reports that the people of the Arsacides 'make great use of a plant they call Binao which takes the place of bread'. And he adds a marginal note to the effect that Figueroa, who wrote an account of Mendaña's expedition, stated that a 'resin called Venau' was the principal food of the inhabitants of the island of Santa Ysabel.(1) Monneron, however, was writing at a time when the pieces of the puzzle were already falling into place; these jottings of his were soon to be taken up by the leading geographer of the day. Monneron did not hold the key to the discovery, and, in spite of what appears in his reports, neither he nor anyone else on board the Saint Jean Baptiste had, at the time, any idea of what they had discovered. Not only were the Frenchmen's longitudes hopelessly wrong - around 2°30' out - but the Solomon Islands were incorrectly marked on the charts, while on some maps they were even completely omitted.(2) It would have been indeed an inspired guess, had they deduced correctly the name of their landfall from the mass of inaccuracies which circumstances had forced upon them.

When the Saint Jean Baptiste left Port Praslin, there seemed little hope that they would be much more fortunate further down the coast. The islands were unknown, far from European civilisation, and inhabited by fierce savages who,

(1) Ibid., p.53. 'Instead of bread, they eat a plant they call Bina', Monneron, 'Rédaction Abrégée', p.41.
(2) Vaugondy's map drawn for de Brosses's 'Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes' shows them in approximately where the Ellice Islands are found. Dalrymple shows only San Cristoval and identifies the Solomons with New Britain, in his 1767 'Chart of the South Pacifick Ocean.'

the French were certain, would delight in taking treacherous advantage of sick and weakened sailors. They were determined to remain on their guard in any further encounter with the natives, but they realised that, under such conditions, it would be far from easy to obtain the supplies they so desperately needed.

De Surville sailed first ENE for eleven leagues, and then veered ESE, as the land was running south-east and he wanted to keep it in sight.(1) He could see a high range of mountains far away to the south west, which was the hinterland of Santa Ysabel. The weather was very mixed, and clouds often obscured the horizon. Once again, to save his men from having to work in the showers, he endeavoured to anticipate manoeuvres whenever possible (2) - such consideration on the part of a captain was rare indeed in the eighteenth century, but the worsening state of the crew called for special care. Deaths were a daily occurrence, and Labé was kept busy recording them in his journal - slaves from Madagascar, lascars from India, sailors from Brittany - scurvy made no distinction between them, and in consequence morale fell rapidly.

'Our crew is becoming impatient at the sight of all this land and appears very worried...I presume it is because they see part of the crew attacked by scurvy, and because nothing has been found in this country to alleviate their condition.'(3)

De Surville ordered that the wine from Portugal be brought out of the hold, and a daily ration given to the sick. The fear

(1) They were out of sight of land soon after they sailed. Labé, 'Journal', 22 October 1769.
(2) De Surville, 'Journal', 25, 27 and 31 October 1769.
(3) Labé, 'Journal', 26 October 1769.

that Labé expressed on 28 October must have been shared by the captain.

'It is much to be feared that this sickness will prevent us from continuing our discoveries as far as we might wish seeing that we can nowhere refresh our crew among such barbaric people.' (1)

On 26 October, de Surville had suddenly sighted a small island so far from the rest of the chain of the Arsacides, and therefore so unexpected, that he called it 'l'Ile Inattendue' - it was the island that Carteret had called Gower two years before. De Surville did not stop, presumably rejecting the possibility that an island apart from the others might harbour more hospitable natives, and be therefore worth manoeuvring to reach. Instead he sailed north of it, and he noticed further south 'a great opening or gulf' - the strait between Santa Ysabel and Malaita. To the south-east lay a great mountainous stretch of land which de Surville, still uncertain whether he was near a continent, or merely a chain of islands, referred to simply as 'la grande terre'.(2) This was Malaita, from which canoes came out towards the ship, were given small gifts, and possibly came back later with fruit 'because towards sunset two of those boats were making every effort to join us, but it was in vain; we had of necessity veered towards the open sea and, as the wind had freshened up a little, they were unable

(1) Ibid., 28 October 1769.
(2) In keeping with his belief that he was in presence of a continent de Surville never gave a specific name to any of the larger islands. He named a number of off-shore islands, but simply used the generic term 'Terre des Arsacides' for the high land along which he was sailing.

to join us.'(1)

Past Malaita the French sailed, their course becoming more southerly as October ended, for they were now about to leave the northern group of the Solomons, and only Ulawa and San Cristoval awaited them. Between Malaita and San Cristoval, de Surville noticed yet another great gulf - 'a void in which we can see nothing' (2) - which was one more indication that they were not near a continent but off an archipelago.

Ulawa he called 'Ile des Contrariétés,' symbolising all the difficulties and the unhelpful currents and winds he had to contend with. He had altered course towards it on 2 November, in the hope that there might be found 'a few refreshments, a few greens for our sick who are not getting better...and whose number grows daily.' A multitude of canoes surrounded the ships, and various gifts persuaded several men to come on board. It seemed for a moment as if it might be possible to land, but mutual suspicions put an end to the plan. Once again, Labé had been put in charge, and had gone ahead in the yawl to sound the anchorage but, finding himself threatened by a native who was aiming an arrow at him, he had judged it prudent to fire and the whole attempt had to be abandoned.(3)

The Saint Jean Baptiste continued on a south-easterly course towards three small islands off the coast of San

(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 2 November 1769.
(2) Ibid., 2 November 1769.
(3) De Surville was forced to fire grapeshot to protect Labé and to discourage the by now frankly hostile natives. 'We fired four lots of grapeshot...' wrote Labé, 'it did not do them much harm'. It was a statement that the islanders might have disagreed with for, so de Surville states, 'some were wounded.' See Labé, 'Journal,' 3 November 1769, de Surville 'Journal', 3 November 1769.

Cristoval, which he called the 'Three Sisters', a name they still bear. There was no smoke, and they appeared uninhabited; it would have been worth verifying this, because the islands seemed pleasantly wooded, and several sandy coves promised easy landings for the ship's boats,(1) but the ship was on the weather side, and the finding of an anchorage would have necessitated difficult and dangerous tacking, something which de Surville with his sick crew wanted to avoid. There was, anyhow, no guarantee that natives might not appear at the last moment, since the other places that the French had investigated along the coast had seemed to be heavily populated.

Later, slightly more to the south-west, he saw another island, 'I'Ile du Golfe', as he named it, which is Ugi Island.(2) But he was now losing interest in his discoveries, having lost hope of finding a port where he could shelter in peace, even for a few days: the natives were unfriendly when not actually treacherous, while the land, although it looked fertile enough, lacked gold and articles of trade. Though there are bays along the northern coast of the Solomon group where ships can shelter, he was worried by the fact that his men were all weak and depressed, and therefore unlikely to benefit from a stay in unfriendly territory, subject to the continual danger of attacks by the natives. In addition to this, he had to consider his

(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 3 November 1769.
(2) Ibid., 4 and 5 November 1769.

partners: trade and a good return on the capital investment were, after all, what he was here for, and he would feel much happier if he could find a place to refresh his men in an island, where it would also be possible to exchange some of his goods. It was therefore with relief that he saw the end of the chain of islands.

To Labé, the unsentimental sailor, leaving the Arsacides was also a cause for satisfaction, but he regretted that it meant forsaking the possibility of enticing some natives aboard to use as replacements - however mediocre - for the depleted crew.(1) Labé's twinge of regret must have been the only one on the ship; not even Pottier de l'Horme, who was composing an account of the Solomons, for which he wished for the qualifications of a botanist and naturalist,(2) could see any further opportunities in this inhospitable land. Many, however, must have felt misgivings at the thought of the unknown that still lay before them.

When Santa Ana and Santa Catalina, two small islands off the easternmost point of San Cristoval, were sighted, they marked the end of what had become a long chain of disappointments, and they received appropriate appellations.

'The islands we saw yesterday from the masts, and which I have names Iles de la Délivrance...I have named them thus

(1) Labé, 'Journal', 5 November 1769.
(2) Pottier was greatly interested in natural history. Of all the journals, his gives the most detailed account of the Solomon Islands, taking up pages 131 to 143 of his Journal.

because our people, who for the greater part are ill, weary of always seeing the same land and of meeting obstacles.... I would like to be in a position to examine things more closely, [but] their health does not permit me to stop here.'(1)

On 7 November, de Surville wrote in the margin of his log: 'left the land of the Papuans'. He had turned what is now known as Cape Surville, the eastern cape of San Cristoval,(2) and, still sailing SSE, he entered the Coral Sea. In the direction he was taking lay the New Hebrides and Santa Cruz groups, and the myriad atolls of the central Pacific, while the long island of New Caledonia stretched like a net across the south. It seemed inevitable that, within a short time, he must find some island where his crew could gain a respite, yet Fate, although he never knew it, played a cruel trick on him. For four days, he sailed in a straight line for the New Hebrides - the group where Bougainville had obtained some supplies not long before - until he was within eighty miles of Espiritu Santo. Another day would inevitably have brought land and salvation within sight - but, on the 11th, he altered course for the south-west.

Yet it was this group that he was seeking. On 9 November, he had written that he 'would willingly believe that we did not pass far from Taumago Island from which we were not distant

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(1) De Surville, Journal, 6 November 1769.
(2) His own name for it was Cap Oriental.

according to our reckoning, because we saw yesterday all day a great number of birds...'(1) Now, Taumako was shown on the charts of the time - including the latest, Dalrymple's Chart of 1767 - as being north-north-east of Espiritu Santo; the logical step was therefore to sail south-south-west, in order to find the land where Quiros had once hoped to found a new Spanish colony. Thus it happened that, on II November, after sailing in very nearly a straight line for his target, de Surville altered course to SSW. The winds were favourable; 'we had fine weather always, all sails unfurled', (2) and, on that day, the Saint Jean Baptiste covered 18 leagues - in the wrong direction.

Even so, de Surville could hardly fail to reach the as yet undiscovered island of New Caledonia, since he was now sailing towards it in a straight line, but the north-west current that runs between the New Hebrides and that island drove him off course, so that on the 18th he passed to the north of it, again just out of sight of land. (3)

De Surville was now faced with a difficult problem: he had sailed, by his reckoning, across Espiritu Santo, so that either that land did not exist or, more likely, it was very small. He had, so it appeared, temporarily given up his intention of making for Davis Land, and was now seeking

(1) De Surville, 'Journal,' 9 November 1769.
(2) De Surville, 'Journal', 12 November 1769. Ironically, on the previous day, the sea had been very calm, and he had written, 'perhaps we are not far to the leeward of some land'.
(3) His incorrect position shows him as sailing right across New Caledonia; he probably passed somewhere north of Huon.


TRACK OF THE
ST JEAN BAPTISTE
de Surville 1769
N. IRELAND
N. BRITAIN
SOLOMON ISLANDS
CORAL SEA
STA CRUZ
NEW HEBRIDES
SAMOA
FIJI Is
NEW CALEDONIA
NEW HOLLAND
OR
AUSTRALIA
NORFOLK I.
LORD HOWE I.
TASMAN SEA
NEW ZEALAND
TASMANIA

No 6

instead some island - any island - where, be it at gunpoint, some fresh food could be obtained.(1) Unfortunately, in this search, the sketchy charts could be of little help to him, for no one had penetrated beyond 20° south in this part of the Pacific - no one, that is, except Tasman who, more than a century before, had sketched the brief outline of another coast, New Zealand, somewhere to the south-east of where the Saint Jean Baptiste was now sailing.

It was therefore to Tasman that de Surville turned in order to find the answer to his dilemma: Tasman he hoped would tell him whether to continue to sail, as he was now doing, in the daily expectation of sighting some completely new 'discovery', or whether to make for one of the stretches of land discovered by the Dutchman, and, if so, which one.

The first alternative was ruled out by the state of the crew, and each dawn that revealed an empty horizon and that heralded the death of yet another sailor made it even more impossible. Labé, who was beginning to fear that the captain was bent on carrying out a secret mission regardless of the consequences, confided to his journal his feelings of despair and anger.

'If this continues, as it appears that it will, God knows what we shall become. God's will be done.' I have had no hand in all this. M. Surville will answer for anything that may happen.'(2)

(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 17 November 1769.
(2) Labé, 'Journal', 12 November, 1769.

Worry had weakened the poor man's sense of distance when, a few days later, he wrote 'I would be really delighted to be able to land in New Zealand or at least in Easter Island (sic) or some other place where the people or islanders are friendly towards unfortunate travellers'. (1)

De Surville, by now, was looking up an account of Tasman's voyage (2). The obvious thing to do, he concluded, was to sail for New Zealand, which was nearer than Tasman's other discovery, Van Diemen's Land, and easier to reach with the westerly winds. On 22 November he accordingly decided to make for New Zealand, recording his decision in a somewhat confused paragraph.

'Sickness and death, which appear indistinguishable among our crew, have caused me to reflect seriously, to see if I could not find a solution more certain than that of following the course, planned from the start, which I am now keeping, and to go, if I can, to New Zealand, and seek there a place of refuge where we can rest awhile. After considering the position, I believe that anything we would attempt elsewhere would be far less certain than this New Zealand suggestion, and that, anyhow, we have no alternative in the state in which we are. According to the report of those travellers who have preceded us there, the natives of the country are ferocious and bloodthirsty (3) but such obstacles are still easier to

(1) Ibid., 21 November 1769.
(2) There were four collections in French which de Surville might have consulted on Tasman's voyage: Thévenot's, Coréal's, Prévost's and de Brosses's. It is likely that he had on board a copy of de Brosses's Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes, and he may have had relevant volumes of the Abbé Prévost's Histoire Générale des Voyages, which had been reprinted in 1758. It is less likely that he had copies of either Thévenot's or Coréal's collections.
(3) Tasman's men were attacked by the Maoris.

bear than scurvy which suddenly attacks the chest, and chokes you in two or three spans of 24 hours'. (1)

Even in this passage, there is a hint of mystery. The route which he was following was, he says, 'de tout temps projettée.' Is this to be taken to mean that the syndicate intended him to sail into the uncharted seas that lay east of New Holland, itself a little-known continent? If so - and it would appear logical for a man sent on a voyage of discovery to enter areas where no one else has been - it clashed with the general belief, held by the officers towards the end of the voyage, that the Saint Jean Baptiste had been making with all possible speed for Davis Land. Certainly the ship was not sailing towards Davis Land between 11 and 23 November, when de Surville wrote these words - into which it may be wiser not to read too much. (2)

Labé, for once, was consulted, and he at once concurred with the captain's suggestion. (3) They both read the account of Tasman's discovery. It was not of an encouraging nature for, although the Dutch captain had commented on the fertility and attractiveness of the country, he had been the victim of an apparently unprovoked attack of a pattern familiar to Labé, who was still nursing his wound from Port Praslin. De Surville and

(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 23 November 1769.
(2) Monneron, as usual, helps to confuse matters. 'The detail of the operations carried out by M. de Surville during the voyage,' he wrote, 'has always been in accordance with the instructions that were given to him before his departure.' 'Extrait du Journal', pp. 3 - 4. Does this include the southern route that followed the Saint Jean Baptiste's departure from the Solomons? And, in that case, what was the route planned for Davis Land, which they wanted to reach before the English?
(3) Labé, 'Journal', 24 November 1769.

he were thus prepared for a reception equally as unpleasant and treacherous as the one the Solomon Islanders had accorded them, but even that consideration had to be ignored in view of their plight. New Zealand could provide help 'at gunpoint if not otherwise'.

On 4 December, having passed the 33rd parallel, the Saint Jean Baptiste altered course ESE towards New Zealand. It was not a day too soon. The condition of the men was worsening rapidly, and those still fit enough to work were exhausted by the additional duties they had to carry out. Nor was it always possible to avoid manoeuvring to meet a sudden squall, or an occasional brief storm. 'When manoeuvres are necessary, one hears terrible cries and moans. The one cries 'Oh my arm', another 'Oh, my stomach, my chest' and so on.'(1) It was little wonder that, as Labé said, 'The men are despairing more and more at seeing no one recovering from this illness; they are losing courage completely. I don't know what will become of them.' (2)

Labé - and no doubt de Surville as well - was afraid that they might have sailed south-east of New Zealand; their longitude was so unreliable that they had met islands that were not on the charts, and missed others that were, so that they might easily

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(1) Pottier, Journal, 5 December 1769.
(2) Labé, Journal, 1 December 1769.

have sailed down to the east of Tasman's coast. In that case, all they could do was to 'continue always along the same parallel until we find some new unknown land'.(1) It was a chilling thought - and how much more chilling if Labé had known that there was practically no land until one reached South America.' A few days later Labé wrote 'when we shall have sailed another 100 to 150 leagues in an easterly direction [and] if we do not sight New Zealand, it can be presumed that the currents will have taken us far to the East.'(2)

However, at half past eleven on the morning of the 12th, they saw land to the East - they were just south of Hokianga Harbour (3) - and they sailed slowly north looking for a suitable anchorage. Mist still obscured much of the land, and Hokianga harbour itself was seen to be barred by breakers. Soon the weather broke, and it became difficult to see the coast, which was low and sandy. They made little progress, the weather remained bad, and it was not until the 15th that they reached Cape Maria Van Diemen. North Cape (4) was turned soon after, and

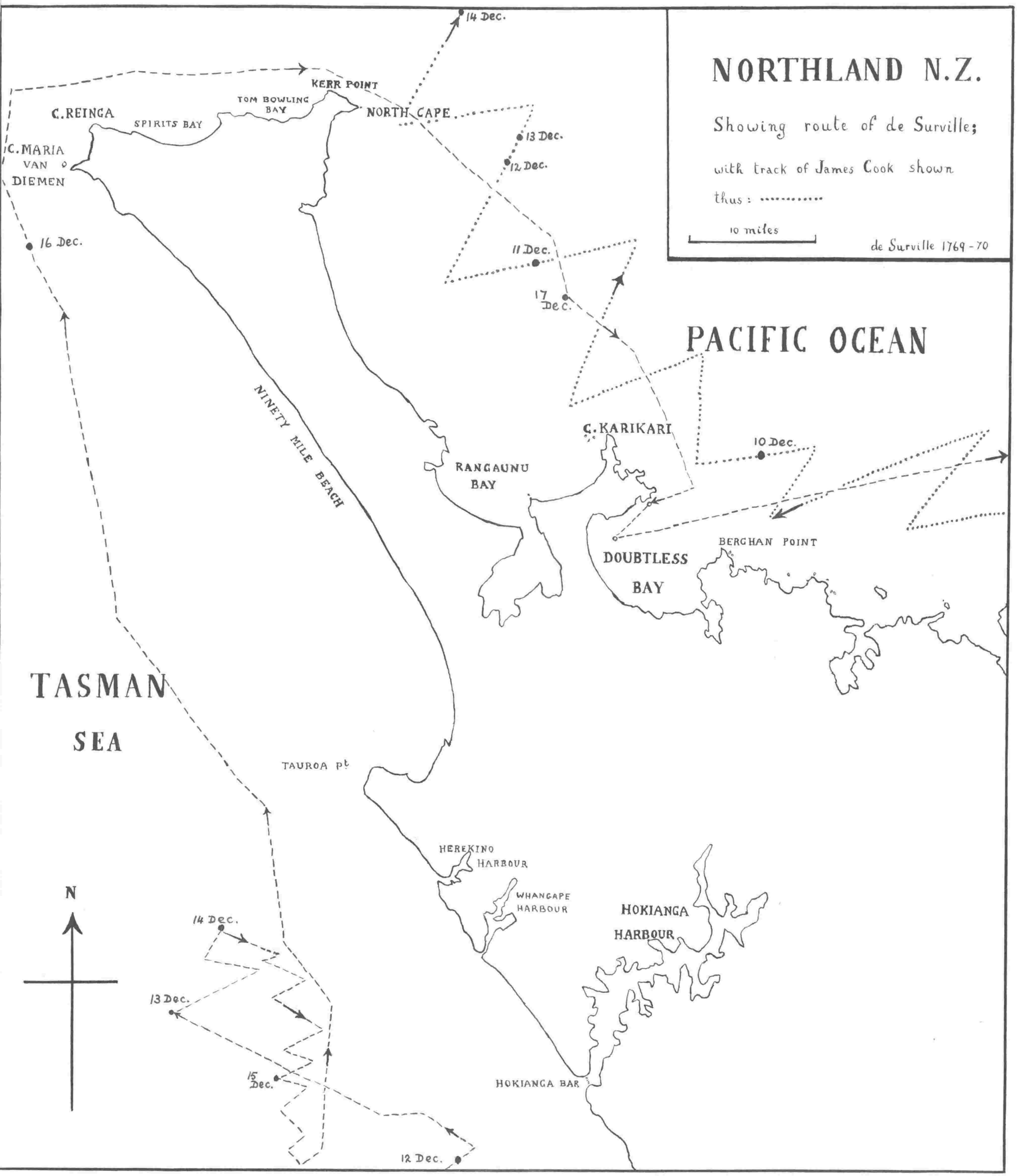
(1) Ibid., 5 December 1769.
(2) Ibid., 10 December 1769.
(3) De Surville observed 35°37'S at midday; Pottier's observation gave him 35°35'S. The latitude of Hokianga harbour is 35°31'S.
(4) Kerr Point, the northernmost bluff of New Zealand, was called by his officers Cap Surville. North Cape he described as 'Its point which ends further east in the sea, where there is a small breaker not far off shore', de Surville, 'Journal', 17 December 1769. Because it was generally believed that Cap Surville and North Cape were identical, the French name was not retained, but Pottier's chart appended to his journal leaves no doubt whatever on this point. The discrepancy was first noticed by R. McNab in 'From Tasman to Marsden', p. 35.

natives - the first they had seen - approached in canoes, and were persuaded to trade their catch of fish against some cloth. In the evening of the 17th, the French anchored in a wide bay, to which they gave Law's landed title, although today Lauriston Bay is known by the more matter-of-fact one - given by James Cook - of Doubtless Bay.

By an extraordinary coincidence, Cook, who had arrived off the coast of New Zealand in early October, was only a few miles away, having been forced out to sea by heavy weather. The Englishman was endeavouring to turn North Cape, so as to reach the north-west coast. Only a matter of a day prevented the two navigators from meeting in a land that had not been visited by a European for a century and a quarter. It is idle to speculate on what would have resulted from such a meeting, and whether the French would have learned the real position and the true value of Tahiti, and been able to identify it with the land they were seeking. It is certain that Cook would have been able to assist de Surville with information about New Zealand and to help him with supplies, but they sailed out of sight of each other, and since Cook had not called at Doubtless Bay the Maoris could not give de Surville the startling news of the presence of another ship in the vicinity.(1)

To the Frenchmen's relief, the natives were neither ferocious nor bloodthirsty. The local chief welcomed de Surville while

(1) Those natives who may have noticed Cook's ship probably mistook the St. Jean Baptiste for the Endeavour. Cook had seen the Bay on the 9th and given it its present name. See "The Journals of Captain James Cook", (ed. J. C. Beaglehole), Vol. I. pp. 220-1.


NORTHLAND N.Z.
Showing route of de Surville;
with track of James Cook shown
thus : .....
10 miles
de Surville 1769-70
14 Dec.
KERR POINT
TOM BOWLING BAY
C. REINGA
SPIRITS BAY
NORTH CAPE
13 Dec.
12 Dec.
C. MARIA VAN DIEMEN
16 Dec.
11 Dec.
17 Dec.
PACIFIC OCEAN
NINETY MILE BEACH
C. KARIKARI
10 Dec.
RANGAUNU BAY
BERGHAN POINT
DOUBTLESS BAY
TASMAN SEA
TAUROA pt
HEREKINO HARBOUR
WHANGAPE HARBOUR
HOKIANGA HARBOUR
N
14 Dec.
13 Dec.
15 Dec.
HOKIANGA BAR
12 Dec.

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the Maoris, in groups along the surrounding heights and along the shore, waved green boughs in sign of friendship. The sight of a strange ship, and the purpose of the white men's visit, no doubt gave rise to many arguments, for, on the following morning, the chief appeared cooler towards the captain, so that, before the French were allowed to land, de Surville had to surrender his sword, which was carried from group to group as a proof of good intentions, before being returned to him. This ceremony was repeated several times until de Surville wearied of it, but at no time during their stay did the Maoris raise any objection to the French landing. Within a few days, the sailors could walk ashore without being surrounded by gaping natives, nor was there any longer any need for caution on either side. Useful greens had been found which rapidly restored the scurvy-stricken crew, supplies of water and wood were being renewed and, although the French did not realise what inroads their trade was making on the small stores of food kept by natives living a hand-to-mouth existence, quantities of fish were bought.

The brief stay of the Saint Jean Baptiste in New Zealand is fairly well-known as a result of local interest in this first French voyage. Monneron and Pottier's accounts - the former in full - were reprinted at the beginning of the century in 'Historical Records of New Zealand' (1), while, more recently, a detailed topographical study of the stay by

(1) By R. McNab, in vol. II, (Wellington, 1914), pp. 231-95.

a resident of Doubtless Bay has been published in Wellington. (1) The relations between the French and the Maoris of Lauriston Bay appear to have been particularly happy, in spite of the suspicious frame of mind of the French after their experiences in the Solomons. There is no indication that the men of the Saint Jean Baptiste broke any tapu' - de Surville, when he wished to cut down some trees, was careful to ask the chief's permission, and he was always scrupulous in observing what he considered were the rules of etiquette of the natives, such as rubbing noses - 'it is their way of embracing' (2) - to the amusement of his officers. (3)

The natives, as they watched the French filling their water casks and gathering firewood, realised that the visitors were not intending to make a protracted stay, and thus a possible cause of trouble - one that Marion Dufresne in particular was to come up against - was avoided. De Surville was glad that there had been no need for the show of force that he had been prepared for as he approached New Zealand. Far from finding it necessary to get food at gunpoint, the French were actually assisted by the Maoris in collecting wild celery and other edible herbs which they found invaluable for their sick.

To cement these friendly relations, and to repay the New

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(1) R.R.D. Milligan, 'Ranginui, Captive Chief of Doubtless Bay, 1769', in Journal of the Polynesian Society, vol. 67, No. 3, (September 1958), pp. 181-203.
(2) De Surville, 'Journal', 19 December 1769.
(3) Pottier, 'Journal', p. 239.

Zealanders for their hospitality, de Surville presented them with a couple of hogs, a cock and a hen, wheat, rice and peas - the first of many such gifts made by Europeans to Maoris.

Although, in most respects, Lauriston Bay was all that the French had been hoping for, it was not very satisfactory as a harbour. Already, on the 19th and the 22nd, de Surville had changed the anchorage in the hope of coming closer to the land, and of finding a more sheltered part of the bay, and one where the anchors would hold better. But, although his final anchorage was more convenient, it was certainly no safer. On the 27th, a strong north-easterly wind rose against which Lauriston Bay, wide open in that quarter, could offer little protection. The bad weather forced back the boat in which the sick were returning to the ship, after a day ashore; not without trouble, the French reached the shore and, although out of caution Pottier de l'Horme refused the hospitality of the Maori sleeping houses, they were befriended by the natives.(1)

The Saint Jean Baptiste itself was in serious danger. The anchors were not holding, and there was every likelihood that the ship would strike a nearby group of rocks. It was only at the last minute and with great difficulty that de Surville and his depleted crew managed to save it.

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(1) Pottier was in charge of the sick party and his detailed account of this incident is given in his Journal under date of 27 December 1769.

'There were some empty barrels on the quarter deck that were rolling from side to side, threatening to break the men's legs or to knock them over and kill them... [The men] have on the other hand rather lost their heads - before carrying out my orders they stare for a length of time as if they were lost. Fear has seized them.' (1)

He found shelter in a small cove, where he succeeded in anchoring and which he had called, appropriately, Refuge Cove. (2) The cost was a broken rudder, damage to the masts and sails and the loss of two anchors. The sick and their escort had, however, managed to return safely. The wind at last moderated, and on 29 December the sailors started to repair the damage. De Surville went ashore to fish and 'to see if I could not take away a native of the country in order to get from him what information I could about this place.' (3) The stay was obviously drawing to a close. It was on the 30th that de Surville made the Maoris a number of additional gifts, which he no doubt intended as rewards for the help offered to Pottier, and as parting gifts.

At dawn on the 31st, de Surville saw the yawl which he had thought lost in the storm. It was being examined by several Maoris. With eight men, mostly caulkers and carpenters to repair the damage, he hastened to rescue it but, although it had

(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 28 December 1769.
(2) The name given by de Surville to this cove has not remained. It is situated west of the site of a former native village. - R. McNab 'From Tasman to Marsden,' p. 47. A discussion of the various anchorages will be found in R. R. D. Milligan, op. cit., pp. 197-8.
(3) De Surville, 'Journal,' 30 December 1769.

been easy to see from the ship, it was no longer visible from the boat; when the French arrived near the beach, there was no sign of it. A trail across the sand indicated that the natives had dragged this valuable piece of flotsam over the dunes to a small river where, in spite of all de Surville's efforts, it remained hidden. Weary and angry, the captain trapped a Maori whom he persuaded to approach, and had him taken to the boat by his sailors, meanwhile causing a number of huts, some food stores and a canoe to be set on fire. He returned aboard with his prisoner, and a Maori canoe taken as an example of local work.

There was now little alternative but to leave the bay; it was not a safe haven, the Maoris would now obviously seek an opportunity to free their compatriot and to revenge themselves on the French, and de Surville could not afford to risk losing his last remaining anchor. On the evening of the 31st, he called the officers together for a conference.

'He read us a clause of his instructions which forbids him from calling at any Spanish settlement in America, and asked our advice. In reply, we outlined the state of the vessel, with neither anchor nor cable, save one, no food nor amenities, sixty-two men dead, the remainder ill of the scurvy, the ship in a poor condition, therefore unable to return either to Manila or to China, where a ship needs to be well provided with cables and anchors, since on all the lands on the way to these two places there are savage people and coasts with neither shallow anchorages nor shelter, according to all the reports of travellers. In addition, our passage would take

one hundred to one hundred and ten days, owing to the calms and contrary winds one finds in the said sea. To attempt this journey would be to risk [the strictures] of religion by sacrificing the remaining debris of our unhappy crew which, to all intents and purposes, would perish at sea, as we would ourselves. To obviate such an inevitable disaster, we all agreed to call at South America, as being the place that we could reach the soonest, since we find ourselves in seas where winds prevail continously from the SW to W and, by keeping to the 33rd parallel, we should not take more than three months to get there. It is the only course left to us, although a forbidden one, but being allied to the Spanish crown and knowing that nation for its feelings of humanity, we have great hope from these gentlemen who rule there and, in that way, we shall be able to restore the health of our crew, repair our vessel and obtain supplies of cable and anchor, food, sailors etc., in order to leave promptly to continue our search for new discoveries, and to return to Pondicherry. In consequence, we drew up a statement which we all signed before sailing from Lauriston Bay.' (1)

(1) Labé, 'Journal' 31 December 1769. This is a passage fairly typical of Labé's style. Monneron comments that de Surville even then did not reveal the aim of the expedition, 'which might have caused us to decide otherwise'-Monneron, 'Extrait du Journal', p.55. Since Davis Land lay off the coast of South America and therefore on their way, this reasoning is not easy to follow. De Surville was obviously pleased that the suggested route was to take them near the mysterious island.

At nine that night they sailed and, when 1770 dawned, New Zealand was fading into the horizon.

De Surville's destruction of the huts and his kidnapping of the Maori were the result of his impotent anger at the loss of the yawl, an asset which might mean life or death to some of his men if the Saint Jean Baptiste were to be wrecked later on the voyage. Posterity, however, would not have judged him so severely had the Maori prisoner, Ranginui (1), not been the very chief who had assisted the marooned men on the night of the storm. Pottier de l'Horme, who recognised him, interceded with the captain, as did the surgeon, but de Surville was not prepared to waste time on the probably futile task of trying to catch another native in his place. He treated his captive well, as he had done his other native prisoners, and the officers made a special point of befriending the unfortunate chief. (2) Nevertheless, a victim of ingratitude and duplicity always evokes - and deserves - sympathy.

Ranginui died on 24 March 1770, as the expedition neared Juan Fernandez Island - and the obvious inference is that ill-treatment and sorrow caused his death. Thus Alexandre Dumas claims that he died 'of despair' (3), while an early New Zealand historian states that a 'broken heart' was the cause. (4)

(1) Written in the journals as Ngaginui and Ngaginoui, neither form being a recognisable Maori name. Enquiries made in the Doubtless Bay district by Dr. R.R.D. Milligan have resulted in the identification of the chief's name as Ranginui. See R.R.D. Milligan, op.cit., p.186.

(2) 'Our islander...laughs with everyone, drinks and eats well and sleeps well.' Labé, 'Journal,' 1 January 1770. He sat at the captain's table with the Solomon Islander, Ibid., 4 January 1770.

(3) A. Dumas, 'Captain Marion', (transl. F.W. Reed) p. 20.

(4) A.S. Thompson, 'The Story of New Zealand', vol. I, p. 233 repeat-an earlier statement by J.L. Craik, The New Zealanders, p. 38.

In actual fact, Ranginui was struck down by scurvy on the 19th and died five days later - but already since their departure from New Zealand four men had succumbed to the disease - a Batan Islander, an Indian and two Europeans - and another six were to die before they reached the coast of South America. (1)

In spite of all that can be said in mitigation, the revenge taken by de Surville for this theft is hard to understand. The Maoris had traded amicably with the French, they had brought fish and herbs to them, they had proved trustworthy and had gone out of their way to offer hospitality to the sick men. For his part, de Surville rejoiced that the natives had been so well disposed, and congratulated himself on having tried friendship with them rather than the firmness and violence that he had once felt inevitable after his reading of Tasman. (2) The destruction of the huts and of the canoe was the result of powerless anger and frustration at being made a fool of by the natives. He had led his party along the shore and over the dunes for several hours, and he had exhausted himself to no purpose; (3) the result was brief but destructive rage. We can console ourselves with the thought that de Surville's stay in New Zealand is marred by this single incident, and that it cannot be held against him that he was responsible for the violent death or even the wounding of a single Maori - something which few early explorers of that country can claim.

(1) Labé, 'Journal', 19 and 24 March 1770.
(2) De Surville, 'Journal', 29 December 1769.
(3) 'We were all very tired after having travelled over all this sand and these dunes'; De Surville, 'Journal', 31 December 1769

If rage led to the burning of the huts and the canoe, the same cannot be said of the kidnapping of Ranginui, for this was to some extent planned. As we have seen, de Surville wanted to take a Maori with him in order to question him at leisure. He had no time to waste on a detailed exploration of New Zealand and especially of the hinterland - he was still bent on searching for Davis Land - and this was the obvious way to obtain further details on a land that remained, so far as he knew, completely unknown. Labé took a different line again: he was sorry that de Surville had not taken away a dozen Maoris to help with the work, and to make up for some of the number lost through scurvy.(1) He had expressed the same regret when the ship had left the Solomons. It was natural that Labé, a simple if somewhat querulous sailor, should consider de Surville's attitude towards the natives over-generous: New Zealand was to him a poor country, and offered no goods of interest to Europeans, especially to those Europeans who, like Labé, had invested their savings in a hazardous commercial venture.(2) There were no gold or silver articles, no ornaments of value. All that could be done now was to sail east in the hope of 'finding islands rich in metals.' (3) Yet here was the captain, out of what to Labé must have seemed quixotic sentiments, neglecting to take advantage of the only

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(1) Labé, Journal, 31 December 1769.
(2) Labé, Journal, 31 December 1769.
(3) Ibid., 18 December 1769. The date of this entry is significant in revealing Labé's pessimistic frame of mind. At the time, he had been off the coast of New Zealand for only six days, and had had as yet no opportunity of examining the country.

commodity that New Zealand could offer - able-bodied labour. And not only that, but de Surville lavished special care on his prisoners, 'depriving himself of necessities to give to them,' when, in February 1770, food became desperately short on board. (1)

The journey across the Pacific, the first to have been made from west to east in such latitudes, took the Saint Jean Baptiste across unknown seas, but did not bring the French to new lands, as Labé (2) and others had hoped, since their intention had not been entirely to abandon the original aim of discovering uncharted islands. (3) There were, however, none to be found.

During the first fortnight of January, the route took them just north of latitude 34°; they then sailed south down to the edge of the 40th parallel, and by the end of the month the ship was back on the 35th; a fortnight later, she was back again to about 39°. This zigzagging continued in this way until the last few days of February. The sea was often mountainous, (4) sometimes 'awful,' (5) and the weather was

(1) Ibid., 16 February 1770.
(2) Ibid., 2 January 1770.
(3) Pottier, "Journal", p. 245.
(4) Ibid., entry of 10-11 February 1770.
(5) Labé, "Journal" 2 February 1770.

only occasionally fine. The ship was suffering greatly, the sails tore frequently in the sudden sqalls,(1) but the crew was in a worse state. True, the stay in New Zealand had been of value, and the greens, especially, had saved the lives of many, but the country had really provided little food. This was a commodity that the Maoris, living mostly on fish, wild fowl and fern roots, could not provide. Since August, when it had been possible to buy pigs in the Batan Islands, no food had been taken on board, apart from cress and wild celery from New Zealand, and a few palm-cabbages from the Solomons. It was obvious that scurvy would soon make its reappearance, and that deaths would again be recorded in Labé's journal.

Labé himself, still not cured of the wound he had sustained at Port Praslin, rapidly relapsed into despondency. 'Never again will I be tempted to embark for any kind of discoveries. This once is enough. Having suffered all the horrors and fatigues of such a voyage, partly dying of hunger, faced with the risk of falling ill, wounded by two blows with a lance and by one with a club, having narrowly missed being wounded by arrows, all this is beginning to sicken me of such operations.'(2) Food, as ever, was his particular concern, but now he complained that the crew was being better fed than the officers:

'We are dying of hunger; if we do not soon arrive [at our destination] it is all up with the officers, since they have nothing to eat... The crew is far better off...and so, for

(1)e.g. de Surville, 'Journal', 6, 8 and 18 January 1770.
(2)Labé, 'Journal', 5 January 1770.

the good of the service and of society, I say nothing...'(1)

As was often the case with his complaints, this was something of an exaggeration, as is shown by the fact that no officer died of scurvy during the voyage. De Surville well knew that his officers had their own stocks of food and wine, however depleted these may have become, whereas the sailors had nothing but their daily ration. Labé himself was not so hard and envious as the comments in his journal would tend to indicate, for he spent much of his free time visiting the scurvy cases, and giving them sugar, wine, coffee and preserves from his own private store.

Water also was very short. It was rationed severely from 16 February, and again on 3 March when it was limited to one half-litre per person a day: the water taken on board in New Zealand was not keeping.

The Saint Jean Baptiste was, however, nearing the proposed end of the voyage, for she was approaching the area where Davis was reputed to have seen his mysterious land. On the morning of 21 February, de Surville asked his officers to furnish him with their estimated longitude; he then calculated the average, which was 121°24' west of Paris. It was time to veer north to seek 'in accordance with my instructions the land sighted by David, an Englishman in 1686.'(2) What de Surville was looking for soon became clear to the officers, although some, like Labé, doubted that the land existed.(3) The route was now set for the

(1) Ibid., 15 February 1770. It was at this time that de Surville was seen depriving himself of food to feed Lova Saregua and Ranginui.
(2) De Surville, 'Journal', 21 February 1770.
(3) Labé, 'Journal', 26 February 1770.

NE, in order to reach the latitude of Copiapo and, on 28 February, the captain officially informed Labé of his intentions.(1)

Again Fate was unkind - not that it mattered any more. The winds, now northerly, were hampering progress, while scurvy, which had not worried the French since leaving New Zealand, suddenly reappeared. The first symptoms were noticed on the very day that the last sick man had been reported cured.(2) It seemed as if neither the winds, nor their supplies of food and water, and above all the state of health of the crew, would allow de Surville to make for Davis Land. On 6 March, he again called his officers together.

Monneron read out two prepared statements. One consisted of 'an extract from the instructions requiring the officers to arm themselves with the greatest constancy and firmness so necessary for discoveries; the other outlined the shortage of water, of firewood, of food and the illnesses that were again beginning to attack the crew.'(3) Each officer in turn was asked his opinion of what course should be followed. They were all unanimous - 'there was only one voice' - that the Saint Jean Baptiste should make for South America without any further delay. 'We have decided,' wrote de Surville, 'at the

(1) Ibid., 1 March 1770.
(2) De Surville, 'Journal', 26 February 1770. 'L'Escarmure, our worst case of scurvy when we arrived at Lauriston Bay'. Poor L'Escarmure was finally to die of the disease in South America.
(3) Pottier, 'Journal,' 6 March 1770. In his comment on the instructions, which he was hearing for the first time, Pottier confirms the identity of 'a land discovered by an English vessel' with the land seen 'by the Englishman David', although he does qualify this with 'dit-on'.

council assembled today that, to my great regret, we could no longer amuse ourselves looking for David's land.' (1)

Free of the worry of searching under difficult conditions for new land, they sailed for the continent - a real one this time. On 12 March 1770 they saw a sail in the distance; it was the first European ship they had seen for over seven months. (2) They watched this far-away herald of civilisation with emotion; it was more than welcome, for things were worsening daily. 'Everyone is in a pitiful state, all attacked by scurvy. God's will be done,' wrote Labé; (3) and again: 'I have only five sailors on the quarter deck, and twelve for manoeuvring on the forepart'. (4)

On the morning of 24 March 1770 - the day of Ranginui's death - land was seen to the ENE: it was Mas Afuera, the westernmost of the Juan Fernandez group. De Surville continued on his westward course, hoping to send some boats ashore at Mas a Tierra, the other, larger island of the group, in order to get water and firewood, but the weather was stormy, and the two boats that he wanted to despatch would have left the ship dangerously undermanned. (5) On 28 March, he sailed north and north-west, intending to make for Peru, where the main Spanish authorities resided. The coast of South America was sighted near midnight on 4 April, and this was confirmed in the morning:

(1) De Surville, 'Journal', 6 March 1770.
(2) Ibid., 12 to 14 March 1770.
(3) Labé, 'Journal', 17 March 1770.
(4) Ibid., 18 March 1770.
(5) Ibid., 26 March 1770.

the midday position showed the ship to be in 75°24' west and 15°35'S - not far from the modern town of Lomas; the high peaks of the Andes were visible in the distance. (1) It was not a day too soon.

The number of the sick, as April dawned, was so great that the meagre quarters of the surgeon were completely overtaxed; 'they have no berths, no mattresses to lie on; they have been arranged on heaps of tow; they have not the slightest comforts; it is hot, they are thirsty and have only one 'chopine' of water to make an infusion; they cry out continually that they are thirsty.' (2)

Finally, on the evening of 7 April, the Saint Jean Baptiste anchored outside Chilca, a small town not far down the coast from Callao. The flag was lowered to half mast to attract attention, and to signal their need for assistance; in the morning, Labé attempted to land. The strength of the sea breaking on the bar hindered this attempt, and he returned, but de Surville was unwilling to delay any longer. He wrote out an appeal for help, enclosed it in a bottle, and tied it around a Pondicherry lascar who was a strong swimmer. The sea, however, was much heavier than he had thought, and the Indian only just managed to struggle ashore. De Surville had taken him to the bar in one of the ship's boats, and Labé was rightly concerned when he did not return; after a while the boat was seen being hauled up on

(1) De Surville, Journal, 5 April 1770.
(2) Pottier, 'Journal', p.303.

the beach; this could mean that the captain had decided to go ashore himself, but how had he managed to cross the bar, over which heavy seas were now breaking? Labé kept a light burning all night on deck, in the hope that a boat might come out to the ship, but it was in vain. The next day made it clear that some tragedy had happened. Although they were not to learn the details until later, the conclusion was obvious that de Surville had ventured too close to the bar, and that his boat had capsized: fully clothed as he was, he would have stood little chance in the angry surf.

Labé, on whom the command now devolved, was thunderstruck. It was a burden 'that was as thorny as unexpected, seeing that M. de Surville had not mentioned to any of the officers his intentions or his instructions'.(1) Labé took the ship to Callao on the morning of the 9th, where he learned that de Surville had indeed been drowned at Chilca. The second-in-command now began an endless series of negotiations with the Spanish authorities. If he had really expected the 'gentlemen who rule there' to be understanding and sympathetic, he was soon disabused.

A guard was placed on board the ship, the cargo was placed under seal and the whole matter was referred to Madrid. True, the sick were cared for, a former Jesuit college being turned into a hospital,(2), but the Spaniards remembered the plausible excuses presented half a century earlier by the French traders,

(1) Pottier, 'Journal', p.313.
(2) The Jesuits had been expelled in 1767-1768 from the Spanish colonies of South America.

and they were highly suspicious of the rich cargo carried in the Saint Jean Baptiste. Rumours began to circulate, as could be expected, about what the ship had stowed in her holds; diamonds and pearls were believed hidden on board, and the viceroy had a thorough search made to discover the secret store. Nothing was found, but the local prosecutor accused them of plotting to break the monopoly laws, and startled Labé by blandly asking for the death penalty for all concerned, as well as for the confiscation of the ship and cargo.(1) Probably neither the prosecutor nor the vicery believed the charge had any foundation and the Spanish authorities were not willing to risk reprisals by being too unreasonable. It was far easier to await instructions from Europe - the delay would enable them to squeeze all they could out of the French. Labé was forced to borrow from the Spaniards for the daily needs of the officers and crew, since he was not allowed to sell any of the cargo. He had engaged the services of a local lawyer in order to find, if it were possible, a way through the cumbersome procedure, but his advocate was more eloquent than wise, and Labé soon found himself in the position of having to seek the help of the French government to protect his own lawyer who had 'expressed with too much freedom his opinion on the laws of navigation.'(2)

And yet, although the Viceroy had nothing but the merest suspicions to justify his action, the French were not entirely blameless. Monneron had brought to Labé a 'cahier' which had

(1) Misc. Corresp. Letter from Buenaventura del Mar to the Duc de Praslin, dated Lima, October 1770.
(2) Labé to the Duc de Praslin, 25 October 1770; Labé, 'Extrait des Pièces envoyées au Duc de Praslin', 4 May 1770; Buenaventura del Mar to Praslin, Oct. 1770. Montenegro to Sartines, 31 October 1774, in Misc. Corresp., in Archives Nationales, B4/3/6.

belonged to de Surville, and in which was outlined a plan for a voyage to Acapulco. The ship was entering Callao, where a doubtful reception awaited them, and Labé at once realised that this document, implying that the French had in mind the possibility of contraband trade with Mexico and probably with the entire coast, was highly dangerous. 'At once, I tore this document into a thousand pieces and had them thrown in the fire without anyone knowing of it except M. Monneron and an apprentice named Chaux who had them burned. While looking for the invoices, journals, instructions and other documents that the Viceroy was asking for, I found another original item mentioning the same plan of a voyage to Acapulco, which I showed to M. Monneron and dealt with in the same manner as the first one. I was strangely troubled, as can be imagined: if these documents had fallen in the hands of the Spaniards, it would have been a blow to our expedition, and would have caused us to run the risk of confiscation and of being sent as prisoners to Spain.' (1)

The syndicate had, apparently, studied all lucrative possibilities offered by the Pacific, before falling under the spell of Davis Land, and these had included a resumption of the old South American trade.

In October, Monneron went to France in an attempt to hasten the return of the ship to Labé; with him he took Lova Saregua, the Solomon Islander, who had survived all the vicissitudes

(1) Labé, '<u>Journal</u>', 11 April 1770. In spite of all his caution, Labé confided this episode to his journal.

of the voyage, and who ended his epic journey in Europe. In France, an approach was made to François Bourdas, a member of the famous trading family and a resident of Spain, and he agreed to use his influence with the Spanish government; at the same time, the French Ambassador in Madrid made official approaches to the Spanish foreign ministry.(1) In spite of everything, two years elapsed before Monneron was able to return with the desired instructions. Labé had spent the intervening time raging against the Spaniards, especially against the officer in charge of the Spanish guards on his vessel, (2) and entering desertions and deaths in his log.(3) One day in October 1770, he had recorded the departure of two Spanish ships on a secret mission, which, he suspected was a search for de Surville's own Davis Land (4). When they returned, in March 1771, having discovered an island, Labé prepared a report on it and set down his private - and correct - belief that the ships had discovered nothing new, and that their island was simply Roggeveen's Easter Island rediscovered.(5)

The Saint Jean Baptiste finally sailed from South America on 7 April 1773, three years to the day since the ill-fated arrival at Chilca; on 20 August, she reached Port-Louis in Britanny, having completed her circumnavigation.(6) Of the

(1) See Misc.Corresp. in Archives Nationales B.4/316. Grimaldi to d'Ossun, 14 February 1771.
(2) Lt.Col. Don Demetrius Egan, 'a monster!', Labé, Journal, 22 April 1770.
(3) Deserters included young de Surville and the chaplain.
(4) Labé, 'Journal', 10 October 1770.
(5) Ibid., 28 March 1771.
(6) Labé, in command, had none of de Surville's 'softness'. When some of the Spanish sailors taken on board complained of the food, he 'fell on them with big blows with my stick'. 'Journal', 26 April 1773.

original number that had sailed from India, 79 were dead and 28 had deserted.

Financially the voyage was a disaster. The expenses incurred in South America alone required 130,000 piastres,(1) a figure not easy to assess in English currency, but which is between £17,000 and £20,000 according to the rate used. De Surville's widow lost all she owed, and had to be given a state pension of 500 livres,(2) while the businessmen squabbled over the disposal of the cargo, a dispute that lasted for more than six years.(3)

De Surville himself suffered from a bad press which, even today, obscures both his character and his achievements.(4) It had been his misfortune to chase a chimera. The land he was seeking did not exist, and the nearest approach to reality - Tahiti - was not wealthy in the European sense. He was looking for a land inhabited by natives who could offer gold or manufactures of various kinds or even spices, a new Cathay or a new Peru, but these were not to be had. Pleasant natives in island paradises might interest the littérateurs in the salons of Paris, new plants and new molluscs might interest scientists, but neither Law nor Chevalier had laid out their capital for such purposes. There were strategic advantages to be gained

(1) Misc. Corresp. Monneron to de Boynes, undated, concerning a credit of 100,000 piastres. Also Labé, Journal, 16 March 1773.
(2) H.F.Buffet, 'Voyage à la Découverte', p.27.
(3) As is shown by the date of the Appeal for the judicial liquidation of the syndicate which is 1779.
(4) e.g. J.P.Faivre in 'L'Expansion Française dans le Pacifique' (Paris 1952) speaks of de Surville's 'treachery' in the Solomons (pp.42-43) and of his 'atrocities' in New Zealand (p.67);the first charge is grossly unfair, while the second is exaggerated.H.F.Buffet mentions another historian's comments,who wrote of de Surville's 'revolting brutalities', see, 'Voyage à la Découverte' p.1.

from the occupation of a number of points in the Pacific, enough to satisfy any patriotic motives that might have impelled the syndicate to despatch the Saint Jean Baptiste so hurriedly on its mission, but such advantages could have been obtained without seeking new islands. What the syndicate had hoped for was Terra Australis; Davis Land, as Dampier had said, 'might probably be the coast of Terra Australis Incognita' - and it was there that any political advantages that Law and Chevalier could foresee would really have lain.

Yet one of the results of de Surville's voyage was to

group of French businessmen to risk a fortune on such a venture, it surely warranted a proportionate effort on the part of the King of Spain. The Viceroy of Peru, Don Manuel de Amat received prompt permission from Madrid for the despatch of an expedition that would forestall both the British and the French, and establish Spanish sovereignty over the island. The Spanish authorities had become increasingly concerned about recent voyages in the Pacific; Wallis and Carteret, Bougainville, Cook, de Surville, all these in the brief span of three years constituted a serious threat to the policy of exclusiveness. Spain had succeeded, not without trouble, in dislodging the French and the English from the Falkland Islands. It was equally important to prevent a foreign base from being established in the south-eastern Pacific on an island that appeared to be within easy reach of the Spanish colonies.(1)

Labé had noted in his journal the departure of Captain Gonzalez, leading the expedition of two ships, the San Lorenzo and the Santa Rosalia, that the Viceroy had prepared. Perhaps he suspected that they were being sent on a quest for Davis Land, stimulated by the arrival of the Saint Jean Baptiste; if he did, he omitted to record it, but more probably it did not worry him for, as we have seen, he personally very much doubted that such a place existed. When Gonzalez came back, having found Davis Land

(1) Spanish aspirations over the Pacific had lain dormant since the days of Mendaña and Quiros, but they revived during the eighteenth century, when Anson and Byron's expeditions drew attention to Spain's weak position in the southern ocean. See B.G. Corney, 'The Voyage of Captain Don Felipe Gonzalez', pp. xxvii/xxviii.

in a matter of weeks, he was similarly unimpressed, for it appeared to him that Gonzalez had merely rediscovered Easter Island - which is exactly what Gonzalez had done - the value of which was strictly limited. But for the Spanish, the problem raised by the arrival of the Saint Jean Baptiste was solved, and it was announced that Davis Land had been discovered and renamed San Carlos Island.(1) It was not until a second expedition was ready to sail for this island that the Spaniards began to have doubts, for by then detailed reports of the discovery of Tahiti had arrived. Tahiti seemed far more valuable a possession than Easter Island could ever be, and it was left to the commander of the Santa Maria Magdalena to choose between San Carlos Island and Tahiti, and Bonechea decided on the latter.(2) Thus, the short-lived attempt on the part of Spain to settle in Tahiti can be traced back to de Surville's voyage, for it was on account of the Saint Jean Baptiste that plans for a settlement in the Pacific had been drawn up.

But of far greater importance was the question of the Solomons, which had puzzled geographers since the days of Quiros. Carteret and Bougainville provided the first clues to the answer, but it was de Surville who brought back conclusive evidence; all that remained was for a geographer to examine the evidence, and to propound a solution. It should surprise no one that the geographer who reached the conclusion that de Surville had re-discovered the Solomons was a Frenchman - the Arsacides, as Monneron and his friends well

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(1) For a report in Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle, dated November/December 1771, see ibid., p.xlvii.

(2) 'Narrative of Fr.Joseph Amich', in Corney, Quest and Occupation of Tahiti, vol.II, pp.68-9.

knew, was a continent or an archipelago of very considerable size, and the journals of the Saint Jean Baptiste deserved careful scrutiny. Even then seven years elapsed before J.N. Buache, (1)the Geographer Royal, presented the Académie Royale des Sciences with his theory that the Arsacides and the Solomons were identical.(2) It was, as yet, only a theory, awaiting verification by a navigator who was to be La Pérouse, but, as theories often do, it led to a bitter controversy.

Some, like the Abbé Rochon, found it hard to credit Buache's theory (3), others, like de La Borde, dismissed it as a 'day-dream.' (4) This was hardly surprising, since many doubted the very existence of the islands. Bougainville, in his map of the Pacific, stressed that their 'existence and situation are doubtful'; Carteret shared his opinion - and yet both men had sighted them. Dalrymple and Cook with him, inclined to the belief that Mendaña had really landed somewhere in New Britain.(5)

But Buache had re-examined the evidence, and he had noted that the early maps had all placed the Solomons off New Guinea; this, he argued, reflected the contemporary opinions of cartographers. It was not until the mid-seventeenth century that

(1)Jean Nicolas Buache de Neuville (1741-1825), a pupil of his geographer uncle, Philippe Buache (1700-1773), had worked with Fleurieu since 1773.
(2)His 'Mémoire sur l'existence et la situation des Iles de Salomon', (1781) is reprinted in Fleurieu's 'Découvertes' des François, see infra.
(3)A. Rochon, 'Voyages aux Indes Orientales', p.232.
(4)J.B. de La Borde, 'Histoire Abrégée de la Mer du Sud', p.7.
(5)See 'The Discovery of the Solomon Islands by Alvaro de Mendaña in 1568', by Lord Amherst of Hackney and Basil Thomson, (Hakluyt Society, Series II, Nos.vii and viii, 1901), vol.I, p.lxxv.

they began to place the islands further east until, in despair, some left them out entirely. Mendaña's widow, Buache pointed out, had spent only two days searching for the Solomons after her departure from Santa Cruz; this could mean that she was prepared for only a half-hearted attempt to seek the islands, but it could also mean that Mendaña had told her that they were not far to the west of Santa Cruz. She had given up too soon, and since that time only two men had sailed between Santa Cruz and New Guinea, and both these - Bougainville and de Surville - had sighted large new islands, obviously part of an archipelago. In both cases, their reports on the customs and appearance of the natives tallied with Mendaña's description of the Solomon Islanders. (1)

The case was well argued, but as yet it was only a case. La Pérouse, on his great expedition, was to prove it right or wrong, and detailed instructions were given to him on this point (2) - but La Pérouse never reached the Solomons, and the question remained open. Someone else in his stead sailed into the uncharted space between New Guinea and Santa Cruz, and it was an Englishman, Shortland. The voyage of Shortland, who sighted the southern coast and who gave the islands the name of New Georgia, was a challenge to the national honour of France. Two men rose to defend it, Claret de Fleurieu and J.B. de La Borde.

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(1) C.P.F. de Fleurieu, 'Découvertes des Francois,' Avant-propos, p.ix n., and Appendix, pp.297-309.
(2) Ibid., pp.93-8.

De la Borde can be quickly dismissed. A musician and composer and a friend of Louis XV, he was something of a dilettante; he had written travel books, a play and various compilations, not always marked by accuracy; he was enthusiastic and well-meaning, but he was somewhat embittered by the attitude of the geographers who considered him - rightly - as an amateur.(1) He did not believe that the Arsacides were Mendaña's Solomons, and he did not believe that they were an archipelago; (2) what concerned him was that the British were trying to claim that they had made certain discoveries east of New Guinea, whereas in fact they had merely sighted the continent discovered by Bougainville and de Surville. He had put his protest in the form of a 'Mémoire' which he had read to the Académie on 21 April 1790. To his distress, Buache himself read a similar report four days later and, unhappily, the Académie and the Minister of Marine, Fleurieu, set a greater store on Buache's words than on La Borde's. (3) His doubts on the identity of the Arsacides were brushed aside.

La Borde had to content himself with publishing a pamphlet,

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(1) He should not be confused with the Jean-Joseph Laborde, two of whose sons sailed with La Pérouse. As the name of the author of Histoire Abrégée appears frequently (though not invariably) as La Borde, the spelling of their name can be conveniently used to distinguish them. Both were guillotined in 1794.

(2) J.B.de la Borde, Histoire Abrégée, 'Au Lecteur', p.6.

(3) La Borde was unfortunate in that his ideas often coincided with the ideas of others. His suggestion for a canal across the central American isthmus had also occurred to someone else. (See his 'Mémoire' on this subject reprinted in volume II of his Histoire Abrégée.) Buache's conclusions about the Solomons had been known prior to 1790.

in which his views were expressed - indeed blazoned in the title itself - 'Mémoire sur la Prétendue Découverte faite en 1788 par des Anglois d'un continent qui n'est autre chose que la Terre des Arsacides'.(1) The man in the street hardly needed to open the book to know that an injustice had been committed.

Claret de Fleurieu, (2) whose own book appeared in 1790, was a man of far greater standing than LaBorde. He was a naval man, a captain at the age of 38 and the director of France's ports and arsenals at 39. In the uneasy months that followed the outbreak of the Revolution, he had been appointed Minister of Marine, a post he was to hold for only a short time, but after surviving the Terror - something which LaBorde failed to do - he was to go on to an honour-laden career that was to make his name one of the greatest in the history of French hydrography.

Fleurieu had early endorsed Buache's conclusions on the Arsacides; the reasoning appeared sound and logical, and he set himself the task of enlarging upon it, something which necessitated a detailed re-examination of the voyages of Mendaña and Quiros. He was able to identify some of the landfalls of Mendaña on the outline of de Surville's 'Grande Terre', and to add to the old Spanish outline of the Solomons the entirely new discoveries of Bougainville and Carteret, for the latter had sighted a part of the archipelago which the Spanish had not

(1) Reprinted in volume II of his 'Histoire Abrégée'.
(2) Charles Pierre Claret, Comte de Fleurieu (1738-1810), after serving in the Seven Years' War, had devoted himself to the study of methods of determining longitude and had worked with the watchmaker Berthoud whose chronometer he had tested in 1769 on the Isis.

reached. In time, this enabled Fleurieu to draw up a new composite map of the Solomon Islands which summarised the voyages of all four.(1)

Even then, the theory might still have remained open to dispute, for de Surville's charts of the Arsacides coast were sketchy, while Mendaña's had been the subject of disagreements for nearly two centuries. What clinched the matter was the detailed description of the islands that the Spanish and the French had given in their respective journals. Monneron had already dropped a hint in his 'Extrait du Voyage' of 1771, and there was plenty of additional evidence in the journals of de Surville, Pottier de l'Horme and Labé.(2) The attitude of the natives towards strangers, their appearance and dress, their ability to mimic the speech of the Spanish and of the French sailors, their canoes and artifacts, their food and the flora of the islands, all these added evidence to a case that was already extremely plausible. The French authorities privately considered the matter settled, and they were merely awaiting a final verification by La Pérouse - but, as events turned out, it was not he but d'Entrecasteaux who took a French expedition to the Solomons. And while the French were awaiting news of La Pérouse's ill-fated voyage, they learned of Shortland's discovery of New Georgia.

(1) 'Découvertes des François,' pp.201-4.
(2) If Monneron's marginal comments about Bougainville's voyage and the 'Binao' plant are the result of his own reflections, he should receive full credit for his acumen.

In springing to the defence of the French navigators, Fleurieu was again Buache's mouthpiece for, as we have seen, the geographer had raised the question before the Académie at much the same time as LaBorde. Fleurieu did not need to add very much to the discussion of the Solomons-Arsacides, which he had prepared, for it established ipso facto the prior discovery of the archipelago by the Spanish and the French and thus provided a ready-made answer to any excessive claims by the English. As LaBorde had done, Fleurieu dealt with the matter in the title of his book (1); Shortland could retain for Britain the island of New Georgia and a few headlands and bays - the rest, incontrovertibly, belonged to the French and Spanish discoverers.

Thus was the problem of the Solomons finally solved. With Cook's contributions in the south-west, the map of the Pacific could for the first time take on a definitive appearance. The mysterious islands which had beguiled cosmographers for so long could now be finally set down in their appropriate place, while the rumours of their great wealth, which had caused them to be named after Solomon, could be laid to rest with the ghost of Davis Land. It had been de Surville's destiny to re-discover a land which many believed did not exist, while losing his own life on a fruitless search for a totally imaginary island.

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(1) The full title of Fleurieu's book is 'Découvertes des François en 1768 et 1769 dans le Sud Est de la Nouvelle Guinée et reconnaissance postérieure des mêmes terres par des navigateurs anglois qui leur ont imposé de nouveaux noms. Précédé de l'abrégé historique des navigations et des découvertes des Espagnols dans les mêmes parages.' (Paris, 1790.)

3

MARION DU FRESNE

In March 1770, Ahu-toru, who had spent eleven months in Paris, sailed from La Rochelle in the Brisson, on the first stage of his journey back to Tahiti. (1) Bougainville had outlined the route to be followed from the Ile de France, and he had donated 36,000 livres - not far from a third of his fortune - towards chartering a ship in Port Louis. The Duchesse de Choiseul, under whose protection the Tahitian remained, had given a sum of money for the purchase of implements, animals and seeds for the islanders; (2) the king of Spain had authorised the expedition to land freely in the Philippines if circumstances required it. Thus, when he arrived at the Ile de France in October, Ahu-toru, who now called himself Poutavery, had every cause to be grateful to the French, and optimistic about his prospects of returning to his native island.

Pierre Poivre, the brilliant civil administrator of the Ile de France, who had sent M. de St. Felix in 1771, and who was to send M. de Forval in 1772 on a fruitless search for an island called St. Jean de Lisbonne, (3) and [redacted], in

(1) L.A. de Bougainville, Voyage autour du Monde, (1771) pp. 226-7.
(2) It is not clear what happened to the gifts of money in the end.
(3) This non-existent island is shown on Vaugondy's map (drawn for de Brosses's Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes of 1756) as being about 275 miles south of the Isle de Bourbon, in approximately $26\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ south and $55^{\circ}20'$ east.

1769, had put forward a suggestion for a French expedition to China,(1) at once made plans for the voyage to Tahiti. It was natural to a man of his enterprise and vision that he should aim at combining the return of the Tahitian with some other, broader, purpose.

The matter was also of interest to Marion du Fresne, a local landowner and a 'fireship captain' (2) with a brilliant record and some wealth. Marion had long hoped for an opportunity to distinguish himself, and to sail into the Pacific, where his father, Julien, had preceded him in the heyday of the French South American trade.(3) Like de Surville, he had found himself without employment as the Compagnie des Indes had been dissolved(4) and, seeking employment as well as profit, he drew up a plan which he presented to Poivre: in it were combined the return of Ahu-toru to Tahiti and a voyage of exploration in the South Pacific. The suggestion was exactly what Poivre was looking for, and in addition, Marion provided a solution to the main obstacle-- finance. The island could not at that time meet the cost of such a voyage, while to solicit approval and funds from Paris would take at least a year. Marion offered to pay all the incidental expenses of the voyage, as well as the wages of

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(1) H.C.M. Austen, Sea Fights and Corsairs, pp.37-8.
(2) A rank that did not necessarily mean that Marion was to take up an actual command on a fireship; the rank was granted to those who had distinguished themselves in some outstanding action. Lapeyrouse-Bonfils, Histoire de la Marine, vol.II, p.151.
(3) In the Marquis de Vibraye, 350 tons, 32 guns, 168 men, chartered by Le Fer, a member of his wife's family. Julien sailed from St Malo on 5 September 1711, returning five years later. E.W.Dahlgren, Voyages francais, No.88.
(4) Marion to Minister of Marine, 20 December 1770. B.N., N.A.F. 9439-68.

the crew, if the King would put two ships at his disposal. (1) Marion was prepared to mortgage his property, and he sought the assistance of René Magon, a wealthy and influential resident, who agreed to stand surety for him for a sum of 150,000 livres. (2) Aware of the risks he was running, and that failure would mean the ruin of his estate, Marion asked that, in such an event, his wife might be granted a state pension.

Poivre, meanwhile, was discussing the question with Rochon, who had arrived in the island with Kerguelen, and with Commerson. (3) A proposal to continue the voyage round the world was abandoned as too expensive (4), and the final plan largely followed the lines suggested by Marion.

As well as repatriating Poutavery, Marion was to seek ~~for~~ the great southern continent that Gonneville had once found, and which Bouvet had also searched for thirty years before. If, as was believed, Terra Australis lay somewhere to the south-east of the Cape of Good Hope, it would be valuable as an alternative French base on the road to India; with a fleet based on the Ile de France and on the southern continent, France could straddle the British eastern shipping lanes and, in wartime, cut this vital link altogether. Poivre also wanted to know whether a route to the South Seas could be found that by-passed the Dutch East Indies:

(1) Précis du proget présenté à M. le Général et Intendant des Iles de France et de Bourbon, B.N., N.A.F. 9439 - 66/7.
(2) Maillard Dumesle to Minister of Marine, 17 October 1772, B.N., N.A.F. 9439-69. Marion's paternal grandmother was a Magon, though perhaps not of the same branch. 150,000 livres would be equivalent to approximately £6,000.
(3) Rochon, Voyages au Indes Orientales, p.316.
(4) Poivre to Rochon, printed in Rochon, op.cit., p.306. Rochon and Commerson both wished to join the expedition.- Crozet, Nouveau Voyage à la mer du Sud, pp.148-9.

in other words, whether Tasman's route to New Zealand via Tasmania was practicable for merchantmen.

The expedition would, therefore, have to sail as far south of Mauritius as was possible, in the hope of encountering Gonneville Land; it was to visit Van Diemen's Land and New Zealand, before sailing north-east towards Tahiti. Thence it was to travel west along the 21st southern parallel, where the rumoured British discoveries were said to be: it was another echo of Wallis's voyage. The return home would be effected by following with care Bougainville's route to the Louisiades and the Solomons. Poivre hoped that it would be possible in the Moluccas, which the Dutch could not patrol effectively enough to keep out a determined intruder, to find spice plants that would prove advantageous to the French colonists in the islands of France and Bourbon. (1)

It was the kind of plan that appealed to du Fresne. Born in 1724, Marc Joseph Marion, Sieur du Fresne, (2) had first seen service in a ship, the Duc de Bourgogne, at the age of

(1) A. Rochon, Voyages aux Indes Orientales, pp. 318-9.
(2) It had been believed for many years that the explorer was Nicolas Thomas Marion Dufresne, and he appears under this name in most books of reference. H. Ling Roth, for instance, in Crozet's Voyage to Tasmania, quotes a certificate of baptism in this name, (Introduction, p. 1.) Following research by Miss Janine Lemay (now Mme. Roncato) it was shown that this could not be so (La Guerre de Course à St Malo pendant les guerres de Louis XV, unpublished thesis, Ecole des Chartes, 1948). Marion, whose name appears on various documents during his naval career as Marie, Marie-Joseph, and Macé, was baptised Marc-Joseph, but was known in Mauritius as Marc Macé (Archives of Mauritius, deed of sale of Marion du Fresne's personal belongings, dated 1 December 1774, ref. JE/1.) or simply as Marc (Archives of Mauritius, deeds of Notary Lousteau, ref. Boxes NA 18/5, 18/6). Macé was a forename of his maternal grandfather; Marion's father died in 1739, and the boy may have taken the name of Macé in gratitude for help given by his grandfather.

eleven. (1) He later served on privateers in the War of the Austrian Succession, during which he obtained his first command, that of the Catin, a small vessel which was captured by the English; he was then twenty-one. In the following year, he was given command of the Prince de Conty in which he went to Scotland to bring back Prince Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, who was in hiding near Lough-nan-uamh after his defeat at Culloden. In 1747, now a first lieutenant in the royal ship, the Invincible, he was captured and imprisoned at Plymouth.

After the war, he served in various ships of the Compagnie des Indes, sailing to China in the Montaran, rising to the rank of captain in 1756, when he took over command of the Company's ship Diligente. The outbreak of the Seven Years' War enabled him to return to the navy. His voyage to Scotland of 1746 led to his being consulted in 1759 by the military authorities, who were planning an invasion of the British Isles, and who contemplated sending him on a raid to Scotland; but this came to naught, and Marion instead in the Licorne and the Robuste devoted the next two years to outwitting the British blockade of the Breton coast. In August 1759, he was raised to the rank of fireship captain; eighteen months later he became a knight of the Order of St. Louis.

Between 1761 and 1768, he commanded successively the Company's ships, the Comte d'Argenson - in which Alexandre Pingré sailed to the Indian Ocean to observe the first transit

(1) Biographical details concerning Marion du Fresne are taken from H.F. Buffet, L'Explorateur Malouin Marion Du Fresne, (Rennes, 1959).

of Venus - the Vengeur, the Comte d'Artois and the Digue. He then settled in the Ile de France, being appointed harbour master at Port Louis in 1766 (1) engaging in trade with the Seychelles and with India, awaiting an opportunity for an interesting and profitable voyage. He had been described as a man 'suitable for all kinds of voyages', (2) 'a skilled sailor, energetic, a great trader, (3) rash, with neither principles nor restraint, but brave'. (4) Peace and the dissolution of the French East India Company offered few opportunities for him until Ahu-toru landed in Port Louis.

His second-in-command, Julien Crozet, his junior by four years, had served under him during the Seven Years' War in the Robuste, and again in the Comte d'Argenson when he was Marion's first officer. (5) Both were to sail in the Mascarin, which was a flute, that is a vessel adapted for the transport of supplies and war material.

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(1) Comte de Noailles to duc de Praslin, 30 May 1766, B.N., N.A.F 9439 - 64.
(2) Report preserved in the Archives of Lorient, (1-P/238), dating from 1765 and quoted in Buffet, L'Explorateur Malouin Marion du Fresne, p.6.
(3) 'grand pacotilleux', the 'pacotille' being the marginal trading done by an officer for his own account.
(4) Official report in Archives des Colonies, (C-2/277), quoted in Buffet, op.cit., p.7. Admittedly the result of mixed feelings about an able navigator. It serves to remind us that Marion considered the trading side of the voyage of at least equal importance to the exploring side.
(5) See on Marion's lieutenant, H.F.Buffet, L'Explorateur Port Louisien Julien Crozet.

The Marquis de Castries, with 16 guns, was commanded by Ambroise-Bernard-Marie le Jar du Clesmeur, a man of far less experience, apparently only twenty-two years of age,(1) but under the protection of his uncle, François Julien des Roches, the Governor of the Ile de France. Unlike Marion and Crozet, du Clesmeur was a member of the aristocracy, and his promotion illustrates the advantages enjoyed by members of the nobility in the old royal navy.(2) Since, as captain of the second vessel, du Clesmeur took precedence over Crozet, his youth is an important factor in considering the later part of the voyage, when he became leader of the expedition.

Crozet and du Clesmeur both left accounts of the voyage. There was another officer, Jean Roux, an ensign of the Mascarin, who was keeping a record of events and carefully noting down his observations on the native peoples whom he met. His account was presented in 1776 to Maurepas, the Minister of State. It is coloured to some extent by antipathy towards du Clesmeur, and by a safe, after-the-event display of enthusiasm, but his adverse judgment on the later conduct of the expedition was supported by its negative results. (3)

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(1) H.F.Buffet, Julien Crozet, p.50.
(2) It is true that Marion had gone to Scotland to fetch the Young Pretender when he himself was only twenty-two, but he was then in command of a privateer. Neither Marion nor Crozet had any real future in the Royal Navy except in time of war.
(3) Journal du Voyage fait sur le Vaisseau du Roi le Mascarin, Archives Nationales (Marine), Cn 142. No.18, portefeuille 78, piece 12, with a copy in B.N.,N.A.F.9437 - 118/290. Roux's main purpose in presenting his account to Maurepas was to secure promotion for himself; see his covering letter dated 12 March 1776, A.N.M. Cn 142, No.18.

The two ships were ready to sail by October 1771 - Marion may have been anxious to forestall Kerguelen, who had arrived on August 20 also with instructions to seek the southern continent; Kerguelen, however, still had work to do in the Indian Ocean, and he would not be ready to sail for the south for some time. What was a greater cause for concern was the state of health of Ahu-toru. The Tahitian had spent ten months in the Isle de France, a celebrity in his own right, puzzling people by his practice of name changing - for he now called himself Mayoa (1) - and no doubt eager to set out on the final stage of his journey home. But smallpox was raging in the Ile de France, the worst epidemic the island had suffered for seventeen years, (2) and Ahu-toru was to fall a victim to it. Marion sailed hastily with him on 18 October 1771 and went to the Isle de Bourbon, where Ahu-toru was found to be affected by the disease, (3) and then to Madagascar. On November 4, the two ships anchored off Fort Dauphin, on the south-east coast; two days later, Mayoa was dead. (4)

His death removed the official basis of the expedition: had it occurred a few weeks earlier, the two ships might never have sailed, but too much was now involved. A cargo of trade goods had been taken on board, a great deal of money had been spent on fitting out the ships, and men and officers recruited;

(1) Roux calls him Boutavery; du Clesmeur refers to him as 'Mayoa, improperly called Poutavery'. What had happened was that the Tahitian had now taken the name of his new protector, and was calling himself Mayoa, his nearest approximation to Marion.
(2) Freycinet, Voyage autour du Monde, Vol.I, p.386n.
(3) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.5.
(4) Roux, Journal, p.1. Thus was realised St Germain's gloomy prediction of April 1768: 'I consider his return to his homeland as impossible'. La Roncière, Routier Inédit, p.234.

All this could not now be undone without causing great loss to the syndicate. Marion du Fresne's own driving purpose was, anyhow, not so much the repatriation of Ahu-toru as discoveries of land and wealth in the Pacific, and the search for the southern continent: the voyage to Tahiti had been only a pretext.

Smallpox not having made any progress among the crew, the two ships sailed for the Cape of Good Hope on 9 November.(1) They arrived on 2 December, and Marion completed the loading of the ships, obtaining enough for eighteen months.(2) It was thus not until the end of the year, on 28 December 1771, (3) that the expedition was able to sail for the south.

Du Clesmeur comments that the stay at the Cape was probably harmful to their plans, and he may have been right: 'M.Marion's intention being to discover the southern land, the call at the Cape was unfortunate because it lengthened the voyage, but also because it caused us to lose time, which was precious for a navigation that required to be started in the spring in these regions.' (4)

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(1) Roux, Journal, p.1.
(2) Although he had some doubts(which were proved well founded later) on the quality of the supplies obtained. See his letter to de Boynes, Minister of the Navy, dated December 1771, reprinted in L.G.Kelly, Marion Dufresne at the Bay of Islands, pp.19-24.
(3) Roux, Journal, p.1. Kerguelen sailed from Port Louis nineteen days later.
(4) Du Clesmeur, Relation d'un Voyage dans les Mers Australe et Pacifique, Archives Nationales Marine, Cn.102-29,p.2.

Was the voyage to Capetown planned from the start, to enable Marion to load goods that were unobtainable at Port Louis, and to carry out a few profitable deals, or was it the consequence of the hasty departure from Port Louis? Du Clesmeur would appear to indicate that the call at the Cape was forced on the commander of the expedition, but du Clesmeur was not a member of the syndicate, and did not have full knowledge of Marion's plans, which, as will be seen later, were very vague. Furthermore, du Clesmeur had his own case to support by claiming that the voyage to Capetown delayed the exploration of the southern Indian Ocean, because others have stated that it was he who, by causing the ships to collide in January, made a detailed survey impossible. It is probable that Marion went to the Cape for a variety of reasons - smallpox in Mauritius, the need for supplies, some commercial transactions.

From the Cape, the two ships sailed south-east, driven by the prevailing westerly winds. A fortnight later, land was sighted, the beginning of a succession of islands discovered at the start of the voyage, and the only geographical result of any value of the expedition.

'On the thirteenth [January 1772,] at four in the morning, the fog having cleared, we sighted land to the south forty degrees west; it seemed very high, although the summit of the mountains was still obscured by fog, as was the northern part. We sounded at once, we found 80 fathoms of water, bottom coral, four and a half leagues from land. We at once set our course

so as to approach it, aiming at rounding a low headland which is the southernmost point; we sounded several times more, the bottom was 80 to 78 fathoms of water, coral and fine sand; the coast appeared to me to be very steep... As the wind was becoming strong, M. Marion did not want to approach this danger any closer; (1) we altered course two leagues from the headland. As we sailed on a northerly course, we saw more land in the north by 12° east; we were all the more surprised in that we must have passed very close to this latter land; if the fog had not prevented us, we would have seen it first and very close.' (2)

These islands were to be named Austral Islands, but they were to shed this name later. The southernmost island, and the first one discovered, was called 'Terre d'Espérance' - Land of Hope - 'because its discovery gave us the flattering hope of finding the southern continent that we were seeking'. (3) It now bears Marion's name. To the north-east, the second island, the French called 'L'Ile de la Caverne'; its present name is Prince Edward Island. Both are now possessions of the Union of South Africa. There is a considerable discrepancy in the positions given by Crozet and Roux - the former places the islands in 46°45' south and 36°51' east of Greenwich, the latter in 47° south and 41°50' east; the correct position is 47°30' to 47°51' south and 38° east.

(1) And also because he feared that he might be engaging in a bay. Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.12.
(2) Roux, Journal, pp. 2-3.
(3) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.12.

Whether this was a group of isolated islands or a jutting-out promontory of the southern continent was a question which Marion set out at once to investigate. But on the 14th, the two ships collided. Roux, who had no love for du Clesmeur, puts the blame on the young captain, and there seems no reason to doubt his account of the accident.

"We were three leagues from the large land, (1) the Castries' sail gybed, we saw this vessel making no manoeuvre to get under way and to continue on its course. She had practically stopped and was drifting towards us, and since she was about a league ahead of us we were not too sure of her intentions; we continued on our way; M. Marion, who was annoyed with the Captain on account of this bad manoeuvre, and of several similar ones which he had already carried out, was intending to speak to him, when, the vessel being a musket shot away on our windward bow, the tiller was put hard over, causing her immediately to fill her main topsail. The ship, which was very sharp (2) made such a turn that she fell onto our bow before our vessel could avoid her. The ship struck us in the forepart of the mizzen rigging which she cut with her bowsprit, and carried off with her bower anchor our quarter

(1) The ships were sounding, preparatory to anchoring off Land of Hope; Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, pp.14-5. The soundings gave '80 fathoms, fine sand mixed with broken shells'. The Challenger, which sounded the channel between the two islands, found 69 to 90 fathoms, volcanic sand; see Report on the Scientific Results of the Voyage of H.M.S. Challenger during the Years 1873-76, Vol.I, p.296. It seems probable that Marion had sailed into the channel when the collision occurred.

(2) Unusual for a store-ship; Roux is presumably trying to make it quite clear that Marion could not have prevented the accident.

gallery, a part of our gallery and our lower rigging. But her bowsprit broke and her foremast fell at the moment when we separated. This sad event brought the ship close to loss. A man who was at the top of the mast was crushed. We hove to at once and, although the sea was very rough, we lowered a light boat to send two topmasts to that ship and twenty men to help her to make repairs quickly. We were not more than two leagues from land.' (1)

Du Clesmeur lays the blame on Marion. 'We hove to to await further orders, not believing anyhow that it was wise to approach any nearer to such dangers. M. Marion, who was following me at a distance of half a league, soon joined me and, wishing to speak to me, sailed past me... I ask whether a ship which is hove-to... can strike another which was sailing with a fresh breeze.' (2) However, Marion was a far more experienced seaman than Du Clesmeur, and it is more likely that the accident was the result of a sudden unexpected manoeuvre on the part of the latter.

The accident made it impossible to carry out a closer investigation of the Austral Islands; however promising they might appear to be as outposts of a continent, it was more important to get to some port where suitable timber could be obtained for more permanent repairs. (3) The French forsook

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(1) Roux, Journal, p.4.
(2) Relation d'un Voyage, pp. 7-8.
(3) Crozet, Extrait de la Campagne de la flûte le Mascarin, p.2.

the islands 'with a regret deepened by our belief that the mainland ... is a headland jutting out from the southern continent.' (1)

The two topmasts were used as makeshift foremast and bowsprit for the Castries, these repairs being completed on the 17th, whereupon a course was set for the east. On the 19th the French repeatedly saw penguins and seals, which they interpreted to mean that land was near; the fog, however, was so heavy that the bow of the ship could not be seen from the quarter deck, and the guns had to be kept firing to signal the ship's position to her consort. Progress, accordingly was very slow, but land was once again seen on 22 January.

'On the 21st, (2) we saw it to the north by 30° east at a very great distance; it appeared at first to be very high and to form only one island, but having sailed approximately five leagues we discovered a second island, higher and larger, to the south of the first...At four in the afternoon, we saw east by south-east another land, very high and fairly extensive.'(3)

'On the 23rd, at four in the afternoon, we saw from the top of the masts a whiteness ahead which seemed quite extraordinary; however, we presumed that it was an iceberg; at seven we were a short league away, the side which was exposed to the sun was

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(1) Roux, Journal, p.5.
(2) This date would appear to be an error for the 22nd. See a further extract from Roux's Journal and from Crozet's account, infra.
(3) Roux, Journal, p.5.

very brilliant... I found that it was 200 toises (1) long and 320 thick, including what was in the water. This iceberg, as can be easily understood, could only have come from a very large river. (2) At a quarter past seven, we saw to the east by 24 degrees south land very far away; it seemed to me to be the same as we had seen on the 22nd (sic). On the 24th at dawn, we bore down on it. At 9 o'clock we sighted another island to the east by south-east which seemed to be very high... We named them the Arid Islands.' (3)

The identification of this new island group, later called Crozet Islands after Marion's second-in-command, presents no difficulty, with the exception of Penguin Island in the south-west which, so it appears, the French did not see. Yet, if Roux is correct in saying that, when they first saw land on the 22nd, it lay to the north-east, they must have barely missed Penguin Island which would at that time be practically dead ahead of them. The frequent fogs found in these regions no doubt provide the answer, for Crozet confirms that they saw only two islands at this time, which he called the two Cold Islands, and which would be Hog and Apostles.

'They seemed at first to form two islands and I sketched a view of them at a distance of eight leagues, and soon we took them for two capes and thought that we saw between them

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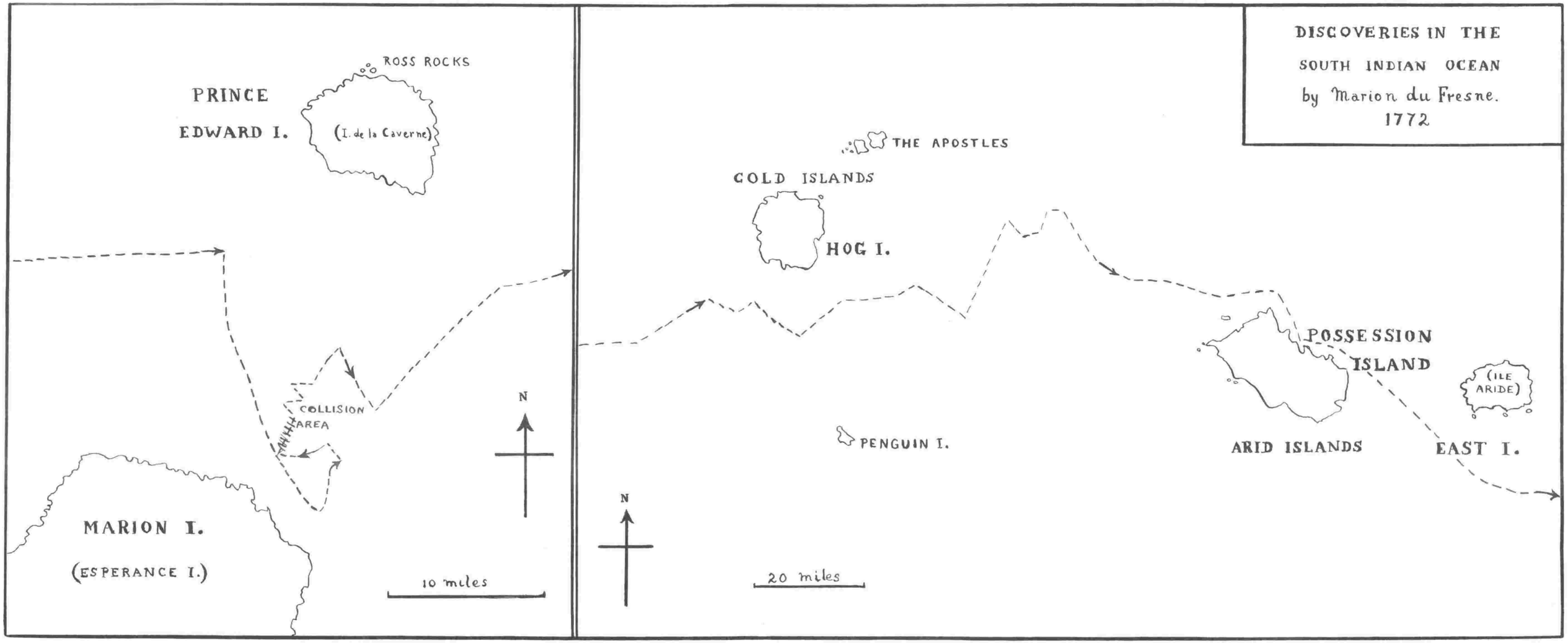
(1) A toise was equivalent to about six feet.
(2) An echo of the current eighteenth-century theory that icebergs must originate from a river, and must therefore be an indication of the existence of land.
(3) Roux, Journal, p. 6. According to Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p. 19, this title was given only to the easternmost island - East Island.


DISCOVERIES IN THE
SOUTH INDIAN OCEAN
by Marion du Fresne.
1772
ROSS ROCKS
PRINCE
EDWARD I.
(I. de la Caverne)
COLLISION
AREA
N
MARION I.
(ESPERANCE I.)
10 miles
THE APOSTLES
GOLD ISLANDS
HOG I.
POSSESSION
ISLAND
(ILE
ARIDE)
PENGUIN I.
ARID ISLANDS
EAST I.
N
20 miles

Nº 8

a stretch of land...but on the 23rd we could no longer see them. According to appearances, we had drifted away during the night.' (1)

It is clear that the two ships first sighted Hog Island to the north-east, and bore down towards it, missing Penguin Island and, incidentally, Heroine Breakers which would have been dangerous had they not altered course towards the north-east. Having sailed nearer to Hog Island, they saw that it formed not one, but two islands, Apostles appearing behind it. Later in the afternoon of the 22nd, land was seen east by south-east - Possession Island which rises to 5,000 feet. It was obvious that visibility was not good, for Crozet envisaged the possibility of Hog and Apostles being the mere headlands of a vast stretch of land. Nor did they realise that Apostles is composed of two main and several smaller islands. Due to fog and rain, nothing was seen on the following day, the 23rd, when the Castries signalled the appearance of land east by south-east: (2) it was the land that Roux reports having seen at a quarter past seven, and was probably Possession Island. But visibility was still very bad, and it was not until the morning of the 24th that the island was seen clearly and, behind it, another - East Island. (3)

This time, Marion was able to take possession of his discoveries. He sent Crozet in a small boat to place a bottle

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(1) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.17.
(2) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.18.
(3) Ibid., p.20.

on the largest island with the usual document inside - hence the name Possession Island. Who actually carried out this symbolic act is not clear. Crozet states that he placed the bottle containing the document on a pyramid of stones fifty feet above sea-level. (1) But Roux is equally circumstantial:

'At eleven o'clock, having noticed a cove where one could land, M. Marion sent me there in the dinghy to deposit a bottle, in which was the taking of possession in the king's name. Since the weather was fine, I landed easily, I climbed on to the rocks where I deposited the bottle in a place from which the wind could not dislodge it: there was a hole between the rocks into which it fitted; as there was no soil I could not put it anywhere else. ' (2)

The truth may be, if Roux is being truthful, that Crozet went with him and entrusted the bottle to the younger man, who took it up among the rocks fifty feet above sea-level. (3)

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(1) Ibid., p.20.
(2) Roux, Journal, p.6.
(3) Buffet, L'Explorateur Port Louisien Julien Crozet, p.13.

This done, the French sailed away, passing through the channel that separates Possession from East Island (1) and continuing on their former easterly course. (2) The birds still wheeled above them, penguins played in the waters, and large patches of kelp could be seen floating heavily on the waves; there were clouds hanging motionless over the horizon to the south-west - were they sailing near the fabled continent?

'All these things persuaded us that we had found the continent, that it lies in this region and not far away, and that all these islands that I have mentioned belong to it. The fog had been a great obstacle; it is probable that if we had been able to go into the fiftieth degree of latitude, we should have found it... M. Marion's intention was to go as far as 54 degrees, but the demasting of the flute put a limit to his plans. That ship even finds it difficult to hold to this latitude.' (3)

February began with heavy seas and strong winds from the westerly and north-westerly quarter. (4) On 3 February they

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(1) Roux, Journal, p.7.
(2) 'When we left the Island of Possession, we followed constantly the parallel of 46 to 47 degrees, 'Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.24.
(3) Roux, Journal, p.7.
(4) Ibid., pp. 7-8.

were probably not more than 400 miles away from Kerguelen's two ships, the Fortune and the Gros Ventre, which were plowing their way a few degrees to the north towards the fiftieth parallel where Marion had decided he could not sail. (1) Had the Castries not suffered such damage off Marion Island, Marion might have sailed further south, as Roux claims, and discovered Kerguelen Island a week before Kerguelen himself.

On 10 February 1772, 'readings of the distance from the sun to the moon' gave Crozet an estimated longitude of 90 degrees east of Paris; it was a difference of 8°30' from his own dead reckoning. Marion decided that the time had come to give up the exploration of the far south, and to make for Tasmania. So, from 45°36' south, on that day, he altered course towards the south coast of Van Diemen's Land. (2)

At 6 in the afternoon on 3 March, land was sighted, but the ships did not actually anchor until three days later. (3) Marion believed that he had entered Frederick Henry Bay, where Tasman had anchored in 1642. He was in fact close to the Dutchman's anchorage off Green Island (4), but the coast here is very indented, and was little known at the time. Marion anchored in a bay within Tasman's Frederick Henry Bay, and his anchorage is now known as Blackman's Bay, while Frederick Henry Bay has now received the name of Marion Bay. To confuse matters further

(1) Crozet estimates that they sailed 1°18' due north of Kerguelen land on 2 February, but his own longitude and his estimate of the position of Kerguelen Island are inaccurate. The ships probably sailed north of Kerguelen Island on the 5th, see 'Nouveau Voyage,' p. 24.
(2) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p. 25.
(3) Roux, Journal, pp. 8-10.
(4) G.A. Wood, The Discovery of Australia, p. 271.

the name of Frederick Henry Bay has been given to the northern part of Storm Bay, further west.

The French were the second European visitors to the island. During their stay they endeavoured to befriend the natives - as all subsequent French visitors were to do - but it was far from easy to break down the natives' shyness and suspicion. Marion tried the unusual expedient of showing the Tasmanians that, skin pigment apart, the French were very much like themselves: he despatched two volunteers, 'naked like these natives,' who were able to make themselves accepted by the aborigines. The French were thus able to land without opposition; an aged native approached them, and offered a burning brand 'which is presumably among them a sign of peace; our men accepted it, and made him a gift of a mirror...' The natives then began to put down their weapons, and the French made further gifts, of cloth and bread, which the Tasmanians rejected. (1) Marion then showed them a bottle of water in the hope of being led to a source, although in this he was unsuccessful. At this moment, the natives considering themselves in danger of being outnumbered, began to grow alarmed.

'Presumably our small numbers had not until then caused them any anxiety, but they appeared very alarmed by the arrival of a third boat, the first two being led by Duclesmeur and Marion, and they made all kinds of menacing gestures to prevent

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(1) Duclesmeur, Relation d'un Voyage, p.16. The theory that the lighting of a fire was taken as a challenge by the Tasmanians and that it led directly to the clash can be dismissed.

it from landing.' (1)

Stones and spears were thrown, although Marion had instructed the boat not to land. Both he and Duclesmeur were slightly hurt, and the French had to fire in self-defence - though without inflicting serious casualties. They re-embarked, and rowed at a little distance from the shore towards what appeared to be a river mouth. The Tasmanians followed them along the beach, and continued to throw stones and weapons, wounding one man. Again the sailors had to fire and, on this occasion, at least one native was killed. Exploration, of a fairly perfunctory nature, was continued for another four hours, but the French found only a marshy plain. (2) A similar unsuccessful search for water was carried out on the northern side of the bay during the next day.

Roux confirms this account of the landing, merely adding that the Tasmanians shouted 'Gola gola' (3), which may have been 'Toda Wadda', meaning 'come here.'

The French realised that the Tasmanians lived an exceedingly primitive life hardly above the level of the few animals around them, and that they could be of no help. If Gonneville had landed anywhere east of the Cape, it could certainly not have been in backward Tasmania. Nor was the bay itself of much more value to them; it was a place of rest after their hardships in the near-Antarctic, and it provided ample supplies of fish, but no timber nor any drinking water - none at any rate that they could find.

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(1) Ibid., p. 17.
(2) Ibid., p. 18.
(3) Roux, Journal, pp. 19-20.

'It is really strange that this country should be so lacking in rivers in all the area that we have covered; we have not even found a fresh water pond.' (1)

Having spent three days in this fruitless search, Marion decided to leave on the 10th, and to sail for New Zealand. He was favoured by the south-westerlies, and enjoyed an uneventful crossing of the Tasman Sea. (2) On 25 March 1772, a snow-covered peak rose out of the horizon - 'land having the appearance of a small island where one could see two white patches.' (3) He named it Pic Mascarin, unaware that Cook had already given it the name of Mount Egmont.

Marion's intention had been to make for Three Kings' Islands off the northern coast of New Zealand, the prearranged rendezvous in case of separation. There, he hoped to find water and wood, since Tasman had reported favourably on them, but he was disappointed and, as a result, the French made several caustic comments about the Dutchman. (4)

The two ships had, however, managed to keep together, because the weather had been favorable, and also because Marion had ordered the slower Castries, which had been straining dangerously to keep up with the Mascarin, to lead and set the pace. (5)

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(1) Roux, Journal, p.13.
(2) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.37.
(3) Roux, Journal, p.15.
(4) Du Clesmeur, Relation d'un Voyage, p.22; Du Clesmeur, Journal de Navigation 11-12 April 1772; Roux, Journal, p.17.
(5) Du Clesmeur, Journal de Navigation, 18-19 March 1772.

Marion decided to seek an anchorage on the north coast of the mainland. On 15 April, he sent a boat into a bay 'which seemed very pretty, and which is near a large headland which we called Thumb Mountain on account of its shape.' (1) But the water found by the men was unsatisfactory and, in the afternoon, they went to another bay a little further north, close to a cape which they named Cape Aeolus. (2) This time, they found no water at all, and they had perforce to return to the first bay and hope for the best. Early on the following day, the two ships anchored near Thumb Mountain but, although they took the water further upstream, it retained its brackish taste, owing to the tide rising too far into the creek mouth.

The two bays are Spirits Bay, separated by Hooper's Point - Thumb Mountain - from Tom Bowling Bay further to the east. Cape Aeolus, however, is not, as is generally assumed, North Cape, but Cape Surville, now known as Kerr Point.

On the morning of the 17th, a gale blew up suddenly, which put the two ships in great danger. 'The ship Mascarin remained nearly four minutes with her gunwales under; the sea broke on board as if we had been on a reef. At half past eight, the vessel dragged; then M. Marion decided to weigh anchor.' (3) This was done so hurriedly that the French abandoned five of their anchors. For six days, they cruised under shortened sail off the northern coast, waiting for the storm to abate. On 23

(1) Roux, Journal, p.17.
(2) Aeolus was the controller of the winds in Greek mythology. The name was considered appropriate 'because of several storms we encountered within sight of it'.- Ibid., p.22.
(3) Ibid., pp. 18-9.

April, Marion held a meeting of officers to decide whether to go back to Spirits Bay to recover the five anchors which the two ships had been forced to abandon. The officers of the Mascarin agreed to return to the bay, but those of the Castries considered this too dangerous - they had a reason for their reluctance, as Marion soon discovered when he overrode them and instructed both ships to sail back into Spirits Bay.

'These gentlemen [of the Castries] had committed a serious error: they had not taken care to fix buoys over their anchors.'(1)

Marion entered the bay on the 26th, and soon found his two anchors; the rest of the day was spent unavailingly looking for du Clesmeur's; so was the night, so was the next morning. It was useless - du Clesmeur's inexperience and his officers' incompetence - was again proving costly. Marion was forced to let him have two anchors of his own. (2)

Shortly after, the French turned North Cape, intending to seek a port on the east coast. Before going south, however, they veered due east before tacking back to the south-west. This manoeuvre, forced on them by the winds, caused them to miss altogether de Surville's Lauriston Bay. This was perhaps fortunate, since the Maoris' reception might not have been friendly. Instead, Marion reached the Bay of Islands, further south. The Maoris, after some initial hesitation, were persuaded

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(1) Roux, Journal, p.19.
(2) Ibid., p.20.

to come on board, and even to sleep on some makeshift beds set up for them in the 'Grand Chambre'. (1) One of them, Tacouri - more correctly, Te Kuri - was to play an important part in the drama of Marion's death. On 4 May, after some preliminary cruising near Cape Brett, the two ships anchored in the Bay, just south of Okahu Island.

Poivre had given Marion a Tahitian vocabulary compiled by Bougainville from his own observation, enriched with the help of Ahu-toru. (2) To the surprise of the French, they were able to use it when conversing with the Maoris, a fact which made friendly relations far easier. It was an advantage which de Surville, forced to use sign language, did not possess, and it struck the French as remarkable that natives so far away from each other shared the same language. Crozet, who was still haunted by the thought of the southern continent, felt that this linguistic similarity proved the theory that the austral continent had in fact existed, but that it had been broken up by earthquakes, so that only isolated island groups remained, inhabited by Polynesians who shared the same original language. Other islands near the South Pole would, in time, be found and on them would be Maori inhabitants. (3)

The Bay of Islands was a heavily populated area - Crozet counted twenty villages large enough to house four hundred people each - and the Maoris were not slow in coming forward.

(1) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.45 Roux, Journal, p.25.
(2) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.48.
(3) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.154-5. This theory of a lost Pacific continent was not altogether new, and it was taken up many years later by others, notably by J.MacMillan Brown in The Riddle of the Pacific, and by George Collingridge in his Pacifika.

They brought fish, and received in exchange glass trinkets, pieces of iron and nails which they sharpened on stones into woodworking implements.

'We were perfectly received by the natives; they came in droves to our ships; they appeared there day and night, and we in turn went into their villages and houses with the utmost safety, which gave us the opportunity of seeing what these people eat, what are their occupations, their work, their manufactures and even their amusements.' (1)

Marion du Fresne's stay at the Bay of Islands is noteworthy for the leisurely way in which the French settled there. Marion at no stage gave the impression of being in a hurry to leave or to go exploring elsewhere. The refitting of the ships, especially of the Castries, was bound to take some time, and Marion never gave any sign of impatience. It is perfectly clear that he was enjoying his stay among the Maoris, and he may have believed that he was gaining their respect and friendship, and thus paving the way for an eventual French protectorate.

After a few days, the French became more familiar with the Bay, and it was decided to move to an anchorage nearer the mainland. Accordingly, on 10 May, the two ships sailed down to the south of the island of Moturua, which the French called Ile Marion, and anchored a short distance from the coast between

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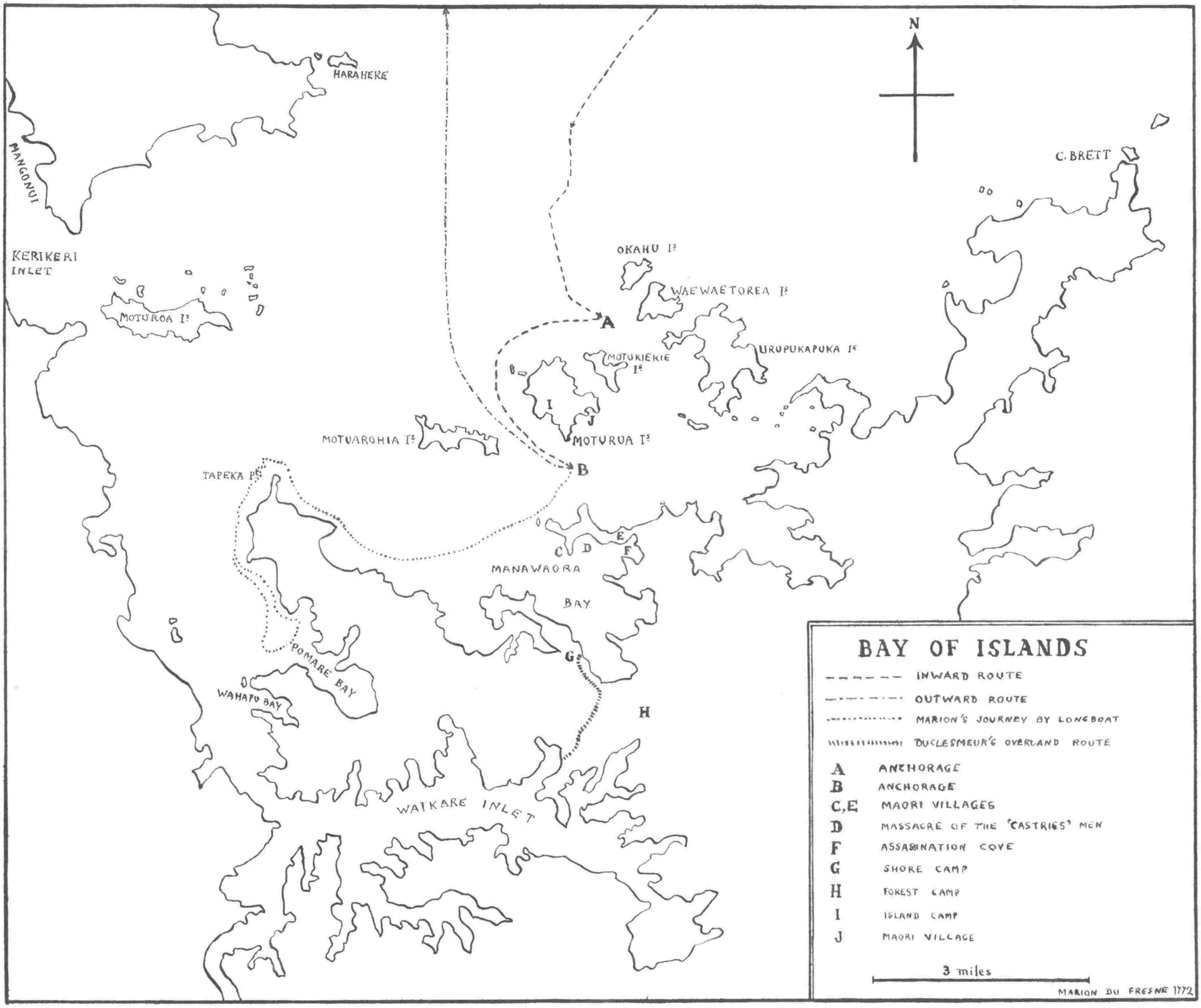
(1) Crozet, op.cit.,pp.64. 5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HARAHERE
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MANAWAORA
BAY
G
POMARE BAY
WAHAPU BAY
H
WAIKARE INLET
BAY OF ISLANDS
INWARD ROUTE
OUTWARD ROUTE
MARION'S JOURNEY BY LONGBOAT
DUCLESMEUR'S OVERLAND ROUTE
A ANCHORAGE
B ANCHORAGE
C,E MAORI VILLAGES
D MASSACRE OF THE 'CASTRIES' MEN
F ASSASSINATION COVE
G SHORE CAMP
H FOREST CAMP
I ISLAND CAMP
J MAORI VILLAGE
3 miles
MARION DU FRESNE 1772

№ 10

Moturua and Mosquito Point, approximately 4 miles east-north-east of the present town of Russell. (1)

Marion established three camps, one on the island of Moturua, where the sick were placed and where water could be obtained; another on the shore of the mainland in Clendon Cove, as a store and centre of communication with the third, which was the masting camp some two leagues further south in the bush: the Maoris had led the French to some fine 'kauri' trees, which they allowed them to cut down for masts; work was therefore started on repairing the ships, including the Mascarin which had developed a leak.

Much time was spent in fishing, visiting and exploring, each man having some adventure to record. Du Clesmeur travelled as far as the shore of Waikare inlet on the western side of Russell peninsula; Vaudricourt, one of the military officers, lost his way in the bush, but was helped back by friendly Maoris; Roux, while out shooting quail, came across two Maoris fighting, not, as he first of all imagined, in a friendly contest, but in earnest, since one killed the other in front of his very eyes. Marion was frequently on the mainland, hunting, fishing, or meeting new or old friends among the Maoris.

In this way, the French explored most of the inlets of the southern shore of the Bay of Islands, (2) although they did not venture across the bay to the north - their charts of the Bay,

(1) The stay of the French has been carefully traced, with an identification of the places visited, by the late L.G. Kelly in Marion Dufresne at the Bay of Islands, (Wellington, 1951).
(2) Roux, Journal, pp. 29-30, describing a visit to the west of the bay; p. 30, describing one to the east.

reliable only for the immediate neighbourhood of the anchorages, show that they were unaware of the existence of Kerikeri and Mangonui inlets. Marion's purpose was not primarily a geographic one: he was not interested in the careful charting of the coastline so much as in the possibilities of trade which might offer themselves at various points in the Pacific. It did not appear as if New Zealand would offer much more than what Roux called 'curiosities', (1) but he was in no hurry, and in time something of value might become apparent. It is only rarely that the resources of a new country can be assessed in the first few days, especially when it is inhabited by natives whose low standard of living makes it obvious that they themselves have not discovered all that the country has to offer. It was a common error on the part of navigators to let their imagination run riot when talking of the wealth of newly-discovered lands; equally easily they overlooked the important gains that could be made from other countries they dismissed as barren. The two extreme examples of this kind of thinking are the Solomon Islands, supposedly duplicating the wealth of Ophir, and New Holland which no one could guess held within its shores the germ of the Commonwealth of Australia. Marion may well have hoped that his prolonged stay and his friendship with the natives might provide

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(1) Ibid., p.18.

him with a clue that would repay in wealth his patience and his kindness. Crozet, at any rate, believed this to be so.

'He [Marion] made several journeys in his boat, while we were working on the masts, to explore the country and to discover, if it were possible, some minerals or products of the soil that would enable a branch of commerce to be established here.' (1)

Although the death of Marion put an end to such hopes, the expedition was of great importance in providing a picture of the pre-European civilisation of the Maori people. Crozet's observations, covering every aspect of Maori life, and his description of the country fill nearly eighty pages of his account; (2) apart from Cook's work, they form the main body of information on New Zealand and Maori society until after the Napoleonic wars.

Inevitably, due to the length of the stay, friction developed. The Maoris were thieves, and not all the French had Marion's forbearance. A Maori stole a sword, was caught and later released;(3) a chief was caught stealing and tied to a post, until Marion discovered him and had him freed;(4)

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(1) Crozet, Extrait de la Campagne, June 1772. Marion's main expedition in his long boat took him to Pomare Bay, see L.G.Kelly, Marion Dufresne at the Bay of Islands; pp.37-8.
(2) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, pp.54-88 and 126-68. Roux and du Clesmeur's accounts, as well as de Surville's, add many details but these were not published.
(3) Roux, Journal, p.31.
(4) Ibid., p. 34-5.

at the same time, one of the officers set some huts on fire as a reprisal. (1) A negro slave escaped from Moturua, and it was feared that he was plotting with the Maoris against his former masters. (2) Some of the French were beginning to feel that insufficient caution was being exercised by the head of the expedition, but Marion's faith in the Maoris remained unshaken. On 8 June, he was welcomed with great ceremony by the natives who placed on his head the four white feathers worn only by chiefs: was this not a ceremony to allay all fears and to silence all critics? (3)

'How can you expect me to have a bad opinion of a people who show me so much friendship?' he asked Roux, who had been expressing his concern at the number of Maoris who were found to be spying on the camp on Moturua night after night. 'As I only do good to them, so assuredly they will do me no evil,' concluded Marion. (4)

The only precautions he was willing to take were against petty thieving; about his own safety, he had no doubts.

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(1) Du Clesmeur, Relation d'un Voyage, p. 33. Du Clesmeur names the officer as Aumont. There were two Haumont on the expedition, a midshipman on the Castries, and a second lieutenant on the Mascarin. It is likely that it was the latter who carried out the punitive raid.
(2) Roux, Journal, p. 31.
(3) 'It is possible that Marion saw more in this ceremony than was intended. One thing was certain; if Marion was correct, his elevation to the position of king only represented the wishes of a small section of the Maoris.' - L. G. Kelly, Marion Dufresne at the Bay of Islands, p. 55.
(4) Roux, Journal, p. 42.

Marion went ashore on 12 June with a party whose intention was to go fishing in a neighbouring cove; he was accompanied by the chief Te Kuri. They did not return that evening, but no importance was attached to this, those on board believing that they were remaining overnight at the masting camp. Early the following morning, a boat was sent from the Castries to obtain some firewood; it too failed to return, and it was not until later, when one of its crew was seen swimming towards the ship, that the truth was learned. The men from the Castries' boat had been ambushed and, with that single exception, had all been killed by the Maoris. Du Clesmeur sent his longboat to discover Marion's fate - the Mascarin's cutter was seen pulled up on the beach and surrounded by a large number of natives. When these men were found to be wearing oddments of French uniforms, and waving Marion's silver-mounted musket, there could be no further doubt that the captain and the men who had accompanied him had fallen into an ambush and been killed.

Du Clesmeur's first thought was to save the men at the various camps, who might be, at any moment, the subject of sudden attacks. He had already sent reinforcements to Roux, who was in charge of the hospital and watering camp on the island; he now dispatched his boat with a detachment of soldiers to Crozet, who was in charge of the masting operations on the mainland. Crozet succeeded in bringing back his men to

the ships and, as he left the shore, fired in self-defence the first shots ever directed by the French at the Maoris.

Soon after, Roux was threatened by large numbers who landed on Moturua Island, but the possession of firearms gave the French enough superiority for them to repulse all attacks. (1) On the 14th, Roux was empowered to clear the island of the Maoris who lived there, and who presented a constant threat to the ships anchored close-by; this task Roux carried out in a spirit of revenge, inflicting heavy casualties and burning the village.

It was not, however, until 7 July, three weeks later, that the French decided to look for traces of Marion in Te Kuri's village, overlooking Assassination Cove, as they now called Orokawa Bay. It was, of course, too late to find very much; blood-spattered clothes were discovered in some huts, together with the gruesome remnants of a cannibal feast. The village was set on fire, as was the neighbouring one of Tangitu, where similar traces had been found. (2)

The hostility of the Maoris had made it impossible to continue the work at the mast camp, which had to be abandoned; the remasting of the Castries had to be completed with what timber was available on the ships themselves. (3) Firewood and water still had to be collected for the next stage of the voyage. The state of unpreparedness of the two ships is a

(1) Roux, Journal, pp.47-8.
(2) Ibid., pp.56-7.
(3) Ibid., p.55; Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p. 115.

clear indication that Marion had not contemplated the possibility of an early departure: he had not anticipated any emergency that might make this necessary. Du Clesmeur and Crozet hurried the preparations as best they could, but they had lost the use of two boats now held by the Maoris. (1) The palisades of the Maori village on Marion Island were used for firewood; these needed to be carried only a short distance and were easily stacked, but even so, the ships were not ready to sail until a month after Marion's death.

Finally, on 12 July, a bottle was buried on Marion island, containing the act of possession, (2) and the expedition prepared to sail from the Bay, which had now been given the name of Treachery Bay. (3) To the whole North Island of New Zealand Marion had already given the name of 'Austral France'. (4)

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(1) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.115. 'We needed 700 barrels of water and 70 cords of firewood; there was only one longboat left for this work.'

(2) The wording is extraordinary. 'Nous avons pris possession au nom de Sa Majesté Louis Quinze, notre Roy, du Continent à l'Est de la Nouvelle Zélande' is a strange way of referring to the east coast; yet the French knew they were in New Zealand and not, as the Act seems to imply, in some continent to the eastward of New Zealand. Taking the document literally, it would appear to mean that the French believed they had found a new continent. This is no doubt an error on the part of the writer, who intended to refer to eastern New Zealand, and who should have written 'dans l'Est' instead of 'à l'Est.' The Act (Affaires Etrangères, Nouvelle-Zélande 1772-1839, ref.T.I.) is reprinted in full in L.G. Kelly, Marion Dufresne at the Bay of Islands, pp.83-5.

(3) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.168.

(4) 'We took possession of the island of New Zealand which the natives called Eahenomaouve. M. Marion had called it Austral France.' Ibid.,p.125.

The motives behind Marion Dufresne's murder remain a mystery. Unlike de Surville, neither du Clesmeur nor Crozet - who simply believed the attack was due to natural savagery and treachery - succeeded in kidnapping any Maoris from whom explanations might have been obtained;(1) they concentrated instead on reprisals which served no purpose beyond that of revenge.

The easiest, and the most immediate explanation was that the Maoris were revenging themselves for de Surville's attack on the Doubtless Bay natives eighteen months previously. This was Abbé Rochon's own theory (2) and one which has died hard, (3) yet it is hardly tenable. Doubtless Bay is some seventy miles to the north of the Bay of Islands; the two districts were inhabited by different tribes. Rochon's theory would require closer inter-tribal cooperation and far better communications than existed at the time.(4) To blame de Surville is unfair to him, and not based on real evidence.

Nearly forty years elapsed before any statement was obtained from a Maori concerning the affair - Alexander Berry, of the City of Edinburgh, was told in 1810 that the French had arrested a chief who had stolen an axe, an event which is reported in some of the journals, but which occurred some time before the massacre.(5)

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(1) Although an attempt was made to capture one. - Roux, Journal, p.93.
(2) Rochon edited Crozet's journal. See Crozet's Nouveau Voyage, pp.141-6.
(3) But J.P.Faivre, who echoes this theory most recently, tempers it with a 'peut-être', L'Expansion Francaise, p.67.
(4) The History of New Zealand, by G.W.Rusden, pp.76-7.
(5) This was the event which had led to a punitive raid by Haumont, and R.A.Cruise reports that the raid was an important contributing cause of the massacre. Journal of a Ten Months' Residence in New Zealand, p.46

In 1824, Dr. Lesson, on the Coquille, reported that a clash had taken place between the sailors and the natives, in which a Maori had been killed. Finally, Peter Dillon in 1827 was told of a fight over a catch of fish which developed into a general affray. (1)

Naturally, each of these men believed that he held the key, or at least the main clue, to the murder, especially in view of the fact that their informant was a Maori. But none realised that the attack was premeditated. Though Te Kuri, the chief instigator of the massacre, came on board to fetch Marion from the ship on that fatal morning, others, friends of various officers, disappeared on the eve of the murder; they had presumably been detained for fear they should reveal the plot that was being prepared, and which was being carried out under Te Kuri's supervision. The only survivor of the massacre testified that the Maoris had sprung at them as soon as the sailors had landed and had begun to collect firewood. All this points to a careful plan which possibly included the eventual capture of the ships (2), and it rules out any possibility of the massacre having developed from a sudden dispute.

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(1) Mentioned in Kelly, Marion Dufresne, p. 88. Kelly reports here that this tradition, involving a woman Miki, believed to be Marion's wife, was still remembered in 1947. This, apart from a clandestine guest, could have been a Maori woman or, far more likely, one of the negro slaves on the Mascarin. Peter Dillon, however, refers to 'Micky' as a European woman who also had a child with her. Narrative and successful Result of a Voyage in the South Seas, Vol. I, pp. 203-4. But there is no record of any European woman on either ship.

(2) This was not a certain aim, as it would have been possible for the Maoris to use their numbers to attack the ships and the camps simultaneously, but only if they retained the advantage of surprise.

There is, in all likelihood, no single factor; although Marion Dufresne was quite unaware of it, every day that passed made for him more enemies, and only increased the Maoris' determination to get rid of the French altogether. Single incidents, such as those reported by Berry, Lesson and Dillon, swelled the ranks of those who were opposed to Marion, and whom his natural overconfidence and recklessness led him to underestimate.

'Curiosity towards the strange visitors would explain the peaceful attitude of the Maoris at first, but afterwards avarice, feelings of revenge for real or fancied wrongs, the fear of permanent French occupation and, lastly, jealousy on the part of the chiefs that their authority was being threatened, seemed to have decided the Maoris to drive the French from their territory.' (1)

As Roux stated, 'I do not know what these natives thought at seeing us thus settling among them; I am persuaded that they very firmly believed that we were to remain there for always.'(2) It is a conclusion that is hard to disprove. The fear of a permanent or prolonged disruption of the economic and social life of the Bay is an important factor. Even Bougainville at Tahiti was asked by one of the chiefs to reduce the length of his stay, which he had intended to limit to eighteen days.

There are also instances of French infringements of the law of 'tapu', probably the easiest for Europeans to break, and

(1) L.G.Kelly, Marion Dufresne p.86.
(2) Roux, Journal, p.28.

the most difficult for foreign sailors to understand. The collection of firewood from burial grounds, fishing in banned areas, entering tapued huts and disrespect towards the chiefs - themselves not always easy for foreigners to distinguish from ordinary tribesmen - all these things accumulated against the French until it was decided that their presence had become intolerable. Thus it was that, after thirty-three days of apparent friendship, the Maoris suddenly ambushed their unsuspecting friends, a piece of treachery which otherwise could be regarded as inexplicable savagery. No doubt, if Ahu-toru had lived, his presence aboard the ships would have made for better understanding, and it would possibly have saved Marion's life, for there is no evidence that the Maoris were unanimous about attacking the French, and some came very close, so it would appear, to warning their friends. (1)

Neither du Clesmeur nor Crozet was very sure of what the next step should be, as no one had a clear idea of Marion's aims following the death of Ahu-toru. Nor were his instructions any more revealing.

'We found only some very detailed notes in the guise of instructions from the civil administration of the Ile de France who, while leaving M. Marion master of his activities and of his exploration, simply set out the best way of carrying out his observations, and of directing them towards objectives likely to be the most useful to our colonies and in general to the advancement of human knowledge.' (2)

(1) L.G.Kelly, Marion Dufresne at the Bay of Islands, p.58. The massacre and the reprisals led in turn to inter-tribal warfare. Ibid., p.99. (2) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, pp.123-4. See also Du Clesmeur, Relation d'un Voyage, p.52.

The usual officers' meeting was held, the youthful du Clesmeur taking precedence over Crozet. The situation in which they found themselves left them little option: both ships had been damaged, and only makeshift repairs had been possible, they had lost anchors and rigging, two officers and twenty-four seamen had been killed, and they had already used up seven months' provisions. All agreed, therefore, that the only thing to do was to continue the voyage in such a way that the cargo on board the ships could be disposed of fairly satisfactorily - in the hope of minimising a financial loss that was beginning to appear inevitable - and to eschew adventurous schemes of exploration.

'We would advance into the South Sea according to M. Marion's intentions but, without searching for distant lands, we would restrict ourselves to finding the islands of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, where we could find supplies. From there we would call at the La Borne or Mariana Islands to go thence to the Philippines, where we would realise something on the cargo, and from there we would return to the Ile de France.' (1)

Gone was the search for the British island that de Surville had heard about, gone was the possibility of a sneaking raid in the Moluccas. What now mattered was to follow a fairly well known route that would not cause too much hardship. In the circumstances, it was all that they

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(1) Roux, Journal, p. 50.

could safely attempt.

Using de Brosses's Histoire to guide them, the French sailed north — north — east, as far as the 20th parallel, when they intended to turn west to search for Tasman's islands of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, in the Tongan group. At daybreak on August 6, they saw land - low-lying atolls on the horizon.

'Finally, on the sixth, we sighted several islands, which were seven in number, which stretched from the west 22 degrees South to the North 33 degrees West.' These various islands form a number of channels...One can only see them from 7 or 8 leagues'(1)

Crozet estimated himself 182 degrees east of Paris - 175°20' west of Greenwich - and 20°9' south of the Equator.(2) He was in fact near the centre of the Tongan archipelago, and in view of Honga Tonga, Fonuafoo, and probably of the Nomuka and Kotu groups, having presumably passed near the island of Tongatabu during the night. The weather, however, was squally and the sky was overcast, and this caused the leaders to continue on their way, without trying to find a harbour in the islands. (3) Scurvy was now affecting a large number of men, and du Clesmeur may well have been justified in not taking any risks in the neighbourhood of what was obviously a dangerous reef-strewn archipelago.(4)

'At four o'clock on the afternoon of the same day, more

(1) Ibid., p. ~~100~~57.
(2) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.170. Both reckonings are estimated, as no observation of the sun was possible at the time.
(3) Roux, Journal, p.60.
(4) Du Clesmeur, Relation, p.60.

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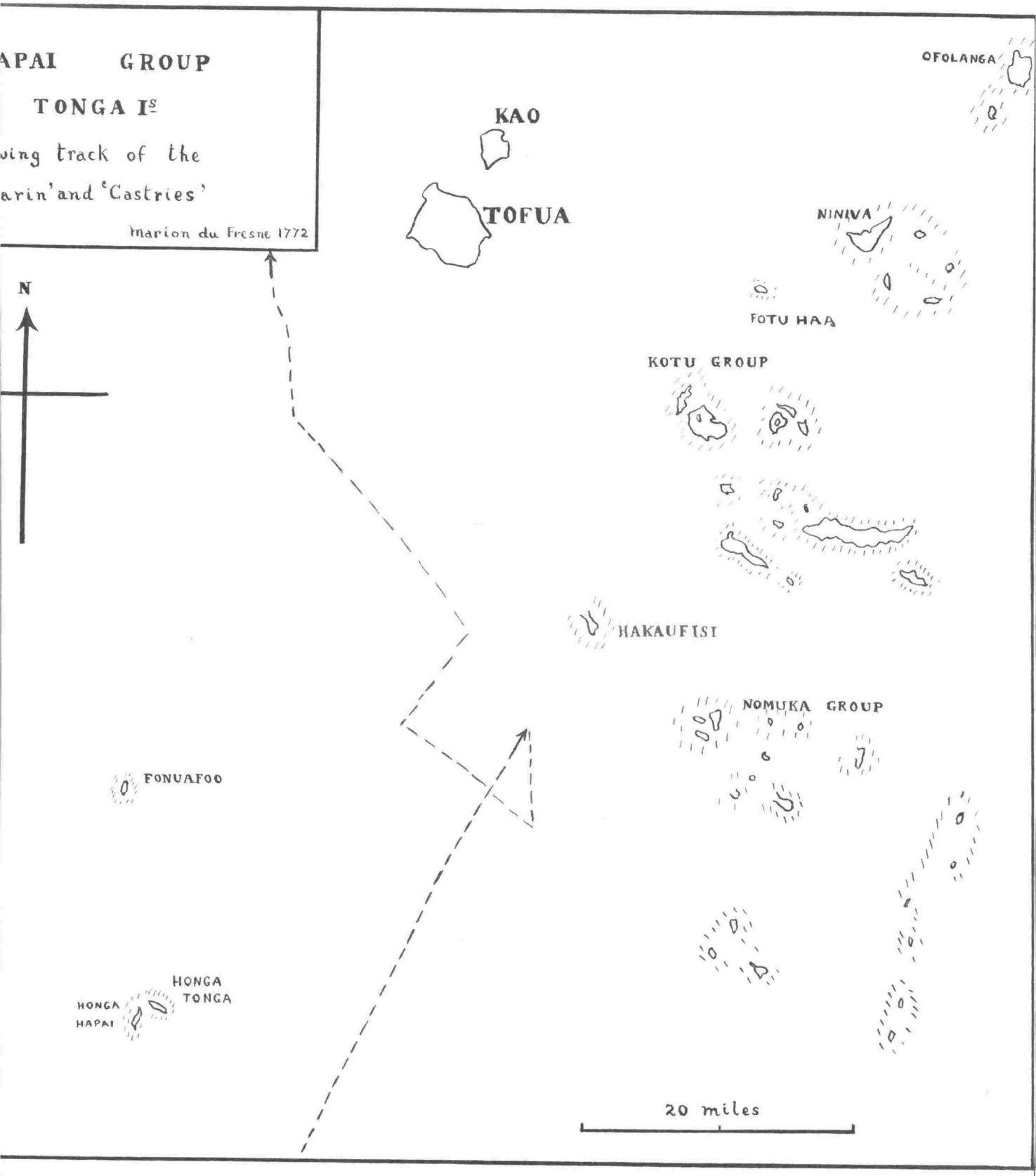
Marion du Fresne 1772



No 69

land was sighted, to the north 12° west. I took it to be a single island, which seemed to be larger in extent than the previous ones, and somewhat higher.' (1)

This was probably Tofua, the largest island of the Ha'apai group, which, rising 1600 feet above sea level, is therefore considerably higher than the other islands seen that day, of which the highest is a mere 166 feet. Had the weather not been overcast, the summit of nearby Kao would have been visible, and Roux would have altered 'somewhat' to 'very much,' for Kao peak rises to 3380 feet.

Shortly after, Roux sighted another island to the north-east. This island, probably Hakaufisi, caused the French to veer south for a time, because they feared, quite correctly, that they were entering an archipelago. At daybreak on the 7th they again saw land, 'the island, which had seemed the northernmost on the previous day, now formed two, which were separated by a channel of approximately a short league.' (2) Now, on the evening of the 6th they would have had Fotuha'a to the north-east, and Tofua to the north-west: and behind Tofua is the island of Kao. Having veered south for the better part of the night before resuming their northerly course, they would have sailed to the west of Tofua and, in the morning, Kao would have been revealed just two miles off the north coast.

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(1) Roux, Journal, p.60.
(2) Ibid., p.60.

These islands, however, were not Rotterdam and Amsterdam, where they hoped to get supplies. (1) Was Tasman wrong again? Should they waste more time looking for his discoveries? One might have expected the French ships to have investigated a little more closely a group of islands situated so near those where the Dutch navigator had found a friendly people. But this was not to be. On the 9th the officers were called together for a meeting, 'to discuss whether we should abandon them [the islands] or ~~to~~ seek an anchorage there, but two-thirds of the officers were of the opinion that we ought not to stop there. The majority won.' (2)

This indicates that they had spent the two previous days west of the central Tonga group; they now sailed north, (3) with an easterly breeze. Land was again seen on the 12th.

'On the 12th at sunrise, we sighted land in the shape of two arid islets; one of these formed a fairly high peak which could be seen 13 to 14 leagues off. We did not alter our course to examine them... These islets are in 16 degrees of southern latitude.' (4)

Crozet, however, does briefly describe the main island - which he called Daybreak Island, from the time of its discovery - and refers to it as an arid peak, steep, surrounded by rocks, about five leagues in circumference. (5) He gave its position as 16° south and 182°30' east of Paris, equivalent to 175°10'

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(1) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.170.
(2) Roux, Journal, p.61.
(3) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.171.
(4) Roux, Journal, p.61.
(5) Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.171.

west of Greenwich.

The two islands seen by the French were, in all probability, Tafahi and Niuatoputapu, both somewhat to the north-east of the main Tongan groups, in 15°57' south and 173°50' west. Niuatoputapu, which Wallis had called Keppel, rises to 350 feet, while Tafahi, four miles further north - the island which Wallis had named Boscawen, and that was probably Schouten and Le Maire's Cocos Island - rises steeply in a peak 2000 feet high. From a distance, the bush-covered islands may well have appeared arid. Daybreak Peak is therefore Tafahi and Roux's second, unnamed, island is Niuatoputapu. (1)

Again du Clesmeur did not delay here; the young leader was increasingly despondent about the dwindling supplies and the growing ravages of scurvy. Officers and men were now interested in only one thing - reaching Guam as quickly as possible.

'We were not sailing with as much confidence as we had when M. Marion was alive. The slightest thing became a phantom, the one on whom command had devolved did not dare to make any decision, the slightest setback worried him.' (2)

On 23 August 1772, the Mascarin and the Castries crossed the Equator to the north-east of the Gilbert Islands. Then, on 2 September, having reached the fourteenth parallel north, they altered course to the west. (3) On the 26th, they anchored

(1) There are two other less likely possibilities - one that Daybreak Island was Niuafoou, the other that the two islands were simply Niuatoputapu which has a tiny islet very close to it
(2) Roux, Journal, pp. 59-60.
(3) Roux, Journal, pp. 61-2; Crozet, Nouveau Voyage, p.172.

in Guam. There were two hundred cases of scurvy on board the two ships. The Spanish governor supplied food and, just as his compatriots had done in Peru for the crew of the Saint Jean Baptiste, turned a former Jesuit college into a hospital. When, in mid-November, the French were ready to leave, he provided them with a pilot for the navigation of San Bernardino Strait to Manila.

In the Philippines, they received similar courtesies from the civil and religious authorities. It was there that the expedition really ended. The Mascarin, which had already sprung a leak during the crossing from Guam, needed extensive repairs; the Marquis de Castries required a full overhaul. The second ship was ready first, and sailed for Mauritius in mid-February 1773; she reached Port Louis on 8 April - seventeen months and twenty-two days after her departure from that port. Crozet, on the Mascarin, left on 9 March 1773 and arrived in the Ile de France a month after du Clesmeur.(1) Both ships had suffered considerably from desertions in the Philippines.

The expedition itself had few results of importance. The French government was mainly interested in the Marion and Crozet groups, which had been discovered on the outward journey in the south Indian Ocean - for here might be the outposts of the famed southern continent. Yet, if Marion du Fresne had indeed discovered a part of it, the southern continent could hardly be as attractive

(1) Crozet went on to a distinguished, though brief, career, reaching the rank of fireship captain. He met Cook at the Cape in 1774 and gave him details of his voyage. He died in 1782.

as Kerguelen's recent Mémoire on the austral lands appeared to claim. The position needed to be re-examined. In a memorandum dated 30 September 1773, (1) the Duc de Croy (2) suggested that Marion's discoveries should be investigated by Kerguelen who was then setting out on his second voyage. The duke stressed that the question could only be settled by Kerguelen going further south to seek the continent of which these might be part.

As far as New Zealand was concerned, the French had had no plans for an establishment there - it was something the ebullient Poivre had not contemplated - but if Marion had remained a full three months in the Bay of Islands, and if his influence with the Maoris had been maintained, the French colonisation of the islands might well have eventuated. As it turned out, his death merely served to strengthen the belief, started by Tasman and confirmed to some extent by de Surville, that New Zealand was populated by 'ferocious and bloodthirsty' natives who would attack strangers even after weeks of friendly intercourse. It took Cook's several voyages to New Zealand to counter this impression - and by then France had embarked on adventures of far greater scale and moment than the mere colonisation of antipodean islands.

From the territorial point of view, the expedition did result in the addition of the Crozet Islands to what became the French Empire, (3) but the Austral or Marion Islands fell

(1) Sundry correspondence relating to Marion du Fresne, on microfilm in Turnbull Library, Wellington.
(2) (1718/84). The Duke, a distinguished soldier, was interested in geography, and especially in the North West Passage.
(3) They were attached to the administration of Madagascar in 1924. See Buffet, L'Explorateur Port Louisien Julien Crozet, p.14n.

to the British Crown and shed their original name in favour of Prince Edward Islands.(1)

To his family Marion left, as de Surville had done, nothing but debts.(2) The ships were returned to the king, in accordance with the arrangements made by the syndicate and the authorities, but the crew and the repairs still had to be paid, and since the cargo was not sold at a good price, a heavy deficit remained. To bridge this, the king gave the Castries over to the estate but, when she was sold, together with what remained of her cargo, she fetched only 44,000 livres. She was not, after all, a very good ship. This was only a drop in the ocean, for Marion had left debts going back to 1768, the total of which exceeded 400,000 livres - over £16,000. He had been a particularly unfortunate speculator, and had left a large number of creditors, among them the unhappy Bourgeois and Gallois, who had lent money to de Surville.(3) The case dragged on for years, until the government on the eve of the Revolution assumed responsibility for a number of the outstanding debts.(4)

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(1) Cook named them thus when he sighted them because Crozet had not told him the names given to them by the French. See J.C.Beaglehole, The Exploration of the Pacific, p.350.

(2) Marion du Fresne's wife received a pension of 300 livres from the government. Marie de Surville was receiving 500.

(3) Maillard Dumesle to Minister of Marine, 17 October 1772, N.N.,N.A.F. 9439/69; Memoire presente par le Sieur Gallois pour la Famille et les creanciers de feu Marion Dufresne, B.N.,N.A.F.9439/72; Bourgeois to Minister, 23 March 1774, B.N., N.A.F. 9439/73.

(4) Report of Notais de Narborne to the King, 15 December 1788, at which time 37,992 livres were still due to the crews, and the total indebtedness of the estates stood at 434,212 livres.

Marion's financial failure called a severe judgment upon his memory:

'It is unfortunate', wrote de Ternay, 'that it should cost the King four or five hundred thousand francs to get massacred in New Zealand a man who is bankrupt and who, by his rashness, has caused thirty of the King's subjects to suffer the same fate.'(1)

No doubt much of the trouble was due to the fact that Marion du Fresne, like many other captains before him, had taken practically no steps to ensure that his plans did not suffer through his death. His officers had found only imprecise instructions among his papers, and there was no one appointed to look after the interests of the syndicate. In retrospect, the expedition appears as little more than an ill-planned and rash venture, doomed to be a commercial failure. Yet Marion was the heir of the old French captains who had sailed so often in the past 'à l'aventure;' of these, some, like Gonneville, had discovered a mysterious continent; others, like Marion, had merely found death.

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(1) Letter of 23 May 1773. Sundry Correspondence on micro-film in Turnbull Library, Wellington. De Ternay was the newly-appointed Governor of Ile de France.

KERGUELEN

France had still sent no official expedition into the Pacific. Bougainville's had been a semi-private adventure, granted as a favour to a popular and able courtier; de Surville's had been a commercial venture; and Marion du Fresne's a semi-official voyage, the primary aim of which was the return of Ahu-toru to his home, and the renewing of contacts with the friendly and idealised Tahitians. Meanwhile, Britain had despatched Cook on a voyage which had completely overshadowed in importance anything achieved by Byron, Carteret or Wallis. It was obvious that France could no longer depend solely on the enterprising spirit of her sailors. Something was needed on a far greater scale than could be afforded by private individuals: the State - that was to say, the King - would have to step in. The financial aftermath of the Seven Years' War damped the spirits of all but the most sanguine, but in time a major expedition became possible. And when the time came, the French Government turned its thoughts first of all to that basic French discovery - Gonneville Land.

If Kerguelen, as we shall see, was to sail in search of it, he was certainly not the first Frenchman to do so. That honour belongs to a geographer, Lancelot Voisin de la Popelinière, who endeavoured to solve the riddle nearly two centuries before. Believing that the third continent stretched from the 30th degree of latitude south of the Equator, and extended over an area larger than America itself — so that it should not have been hard to find - he left the port of La Rochelle in May 1589 with three tiny ships, but got no further than Cap Blanc in West Africa before dissensions and despondency made him abandon the expedition and return to France. The Captains of the two other ships, Richardière and Trépagne, decided to continue to South America, but they only succeeded in reaching the coast of Brazil, before illness decimated the crews and made further progress impossible.

(1) Ch. de la Roncière, Histoire de la Marine Française, vol. IV, pp. 260-1.

La Popelinière was much in advance of his age, and his resources were quite inadequate for his dreams; a century and a half was to elapse before another attempt was made.

In the early eighteenth century, when the French 'Compagnie des Indes' had established a trade route to the East, the means for further exploration became available. Mauritius, Bourbon and Madagascar fell into the French sphere of influence: it was natural that the vast expanse of sea south of these islands should also be investigated.

In 1708 plans were made to despatch an expedition to the south from Nantes under captain Duvivier but his death led to the abandonment of the scheme (1). Nothing more happened until 1733, when a captain in the Company's service, Jean Baptiste Charles Bouvet de Lozier (2) submitted a Mémoire in which he put forward a proposal for a search for Gonneville Land. He asked for two ships, and planned to sail down to the South Atlantic and explore east along the 44th parallel. This plan was rejected because the season was too advanced, but he had no intention of letting the scheme be shelved and forgotten. Although he was the son of a lawyer, his ambition had always been to explore the South. 'He had hardly reached the age of sixteen when looking at a world map he was struck by this immense void around the South Pole, which geographers filled with unknown lands, and he was at the same time seized by the desire to discover them.' (3) He was related, through his wife, to Cardinal de Fleury, Louis XV's former tutor and his current chief minister; he was connected with several noble Breton families, and was highly regarded by the Company which considered him 'perhaps the greatest of seamen and the most skilful at handling a ship, that the Company has ever had in its service. He enjoys the highest reputation among men of his calling.' (4) He was, therefore, a man whose ideas

(1) Mentioned by Bouvet in 'Additions au Mémoire présenté en 1735 à la Compagnie des Indes,' B.N., N.A.F. 9341 - 117. See also A. Rainaud, Le Continent Austral, p. 395n.
(2) Sometimes referred to as des Loziers-Bouvet and Lozier-Bouvet.
(3) Note in B.N., N.A.F. 9439-25.
(4) Extrait du Tableau Général des Capitaines et Officers de la Marine de la Compagnie des Indes, suivant le tableau qui a été arrêté dans la promotion du 19 Septembre 1768, B.N., N.A.F. 9439.

commanded respect, but the Compagnie des Indes, like all the other chartered companies, French, English and Dutch, had to weigh the cost of such an enterprise against its probable commercial advantages. The question of an alternative port of call to Capetown had, however, been under consideration since 1730 (1), and Bouvet anyhow put forward a second Mémoire in 1735, and he added:

'The glory of God and the interests of religion require us to carry out this undertaking; very likely these various countries are inhabited by numerous peoples who are groaning in the shadows of death. One cannot hasten too much to bring them the torch of the Gospel ... and one must apprehend that our neighbours who are separated from the church may forestall us in order to increase their trade.' (2)

The Directors of the Company made further enquiries, and in June of the same year the geographer Philippe Buache presented to them his Extrait Géographique et Histoire de divers Mémoires pour Messieurs de la Cie des Indes, touchant les Terres Australes, in which contemporary knowledge of the voyages of Gonneville and Quiros, and about Australia, was summarised. (3) Soon after this, Bouvet sailed to India, but he continued his efforts. He drew up a third Mémoire, (4) in which he mentioned the development of the French spice trade as a possible result of a voyage to the south. At the same time, he discussed his plans with Dupleix, then French governor in Bengal, and succeeded in arousing his enthusiasm; in August 1737, Bouvet wrote to the Company that Dupleix 'rather than see this design abandoned, offers to have it carried out at his expense, in exchange for the right to send from India to America one of the two vessels used in this voyage of discovery, and to send it back to France or India at his option.' (5) This subtle threat proved effective: the Company approved Bouvet's plan.

(1) Minute de la Compagnie des Indes, 4 March 1738, B.N. N.A.F. 9439-29
(2(Mémoire, B.N., N.A.F. 9341-117.
(3) 15 June, 1735. B.N., N.A.F. 9438-12.
(4) Troisième Memoire touchant la découverte des Terres Australes, B.N., N.A.F. 9341-117
(5) Bouvet to the Directors, 2 August 1737; B.N., N.A.F. 9341-117.

Two ships were allocated - the Aigle, 280 tons, and another of 180 to 200 tons, which Bouvet was to buy at St. Malo and name the Marie. The total complement was to be 160 men: 92 on the Aigle, 68 on the Marie; three boats, each 28 feet long, were to be built for survey work and taken on board; food was to be supplied estimated to last for eighteen months, and cargo for barter or to be carried on to Mauritius was to cost between twelve and fourteen thousand livres. The ships were to sail on 1 July 1738, to make for Santa Catarina, off Brazil, and to leave from there in late October. (1) The instructions were detailed and complicated: great care was to be taken to avoid a separation, a sailor was to be continually on duty on each ship to keep watch on the other; pay was to be increased by a quarter for as long as the expedition remained in view of the southern continent; on 1 March 1739 Bouvet was to hand over command of the Aigle to his first lieutenant Edmond Hay, an expatriate Irishman; Bouvet was then to take over the Marie from her captain, Duclos; the Aigle was to go to Mauritius, while the Marie after further exploration was to return to France via Capetown. (2).

If Bouvet discovered on his voyage places where the Company could establish a post, he was to survey them and to take possession. (3)

The expedition set out from Lorient on 19 July 1738. Santa Catarina was duly reached, and Bouvet spent a month there, refitting and refreshing his crew. He sailed on 13 November, and made south-east. The weather rapidly became colder and, in early December, a fog surrounded the ships, so thick that the men on the Marie could hear, but not see, those on the Aigle. The sea was covered with kelp, and sea birds wheeled overhead, 'an indication that they were nearing Gonneville Land.' On 15 December, the French saw an iceberg of enormous size,

(1) Minute of 4 March 1738, B.N., N.A.F. 9439-29.
(2) Instructions de la Compagnie des Indes pour M. de Lozier Bouvet commandant les Vaisseaux l'Aigle et la Marie destinés à la découverte des Terres Australes, dated 1738, B.N., N.A.F. 9439-34/9.
(3) Lettre secrète dout il est fait mention dans l'article 30 de l'instruction de la Compagnie des Indes, B.N., N.A.F. 9439.

then a succession of smaller ones, 'like so many floating islands.' They nevertheless continued south until, on 1 January, 1739, it being the feast of the Circumcision, they saw a steep and snow-covered land, barred off by more icebergs, which they were unable to approach nearer than seven or eight leagues.

'A land which lay East by North East, eight to ten leagues away; it seemed to them to be very high, covered with snow, and surrounded by ice for seven to eight leagues around, which looked like so many islands. The extent of the land appeared to be four to five leagues from North to South.' (1)

This land, situated approximately, according to their reckoning, in 54° south and 26° to 28° east of Tenerife, the French named 'Cap de la Circoncision', believing it to be a headland of the southern continent and not, as it was, an isolated island. Bouvet's latitude was fairly satisfactory, for the island is in 54° 26' south, but the error in longitude was between six and eight degrees. Most of this discrepancy was due to a basic error; his longitude at Santa Catarina was 4° 20' too far east; but even when this is corrected a difference of two degrees remains. This was to make the eventual rediscovery of the island rather difficult. (2)

An iceberg in the vicinity forced the ships to sail to the south-east for a short distance. On 2 January, the latitude was 54° 40', 'the southernmost point we reached.' (3) There was some scurvy on board the Aigle, but the men of the Marie were in better shape. "As we had a large crew, we took care to rest them in turn for several days.' (4) Fog intervened; on 4 January, the ships covered about five leagues; on the 5th, the fog was too thick for any land to be seen; on the

(1) Extrait du Voyage fait aux Terres Australes, les années 1738 & 1739 par M.des Loziers Bouvet, p.4.

(2) J.C. Beaglehole, The Voyage of the Resolution and the Adventure, Intro. p.liii. Corrected, Bouvet's longitude is 5° to 7° east of Greenwich; Bouvet Island is in 3° 24' east.

(3) Extrait d'une lettre de M. de Lozier Bouvet écrite de Lorient à la Compagnie des Indes, 26 June 1739, B.N., N.A.F. 9439-40/52.

(4) Ibid.

following day it cleared just before midday, and Bouvet found he was still in sight of land. The fog then returned, it did not clear until the 8th when he thought he could see land to NNE; he waited another two days before conditions improved again, and then found it was a cloud bank. No sooner had this been established than the fog returned. All he could ascertain was that the snow-covered land stretched eight to ten leagues from west to east and about six to the south-east. 'We had been unable to discover whether it was part of the continent or an island. There had been no weather suitable for our boats ... Nearly all our people were ill or pretended to be.' (1) 'On the 12th, seeing that our efforts were useless, and that the season was becoming more advanced without any improvement in the weather, I decided to leave this land which is so far south.' (2) It was certainly too southerly and too inaccessible to be of any use as a port of call for India ships. Some doubted that this was anything more than an isolated island for, when the fog cleared, 'had it been a continent or a fairly big island, it would have been impossible for us not to notice other lands going a little toward the South.' (3) Bouvet contented himself with drawing the usual eighteenth-century conclusion about the presence of icebergs: since there was ice, there must be land nearby. 'The quantity of ice of which these seas are full leads one to the conclusion that there is much land in this part of the Southern Hemisphere.' (4)

Bouvet sailed north-east for several days, and then continued east between the 51st and 52nd parallels. He hoped there to find Gonneville land which he knew to be in milder latitudes than Cape Circumcision, but nothing was seen. He sailed north-east again, but January ended with no land in sight. On 5 February 1739, 'being in latitude 41° 30' and longitude 60° [east of Tenerife], I passed on

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(1) Ibid.
(2) Extrait du Voyage ... p.39
(3) A. Rainaud, quoting from the journal of the pilote, Jean Catin, in Le Continent Austral, pp. 401-2
(4) Extrait du Voyage ... p.5.

board the Marie, and handed command of the Aigle over to M. Hay who was first lieutenant, this in accordance with my instructions. At midday, we were ready to sail and we separated, without anyone having died on board either vessel. Each went on her way, the Aigle for the Ile de France, and the Marie for the Cape of Good Hope.' (1) The correct longitude was probably between 37° and 38° east of Greenwich.

The Marie arrived at the Cape on 28 February, spent a month there to refresh the crew, and left again on 31 March. Knowing that the Compagnie des Indes was searching for another port of call, Bouvet spent some time in the South Atlantic fruitlessly looking for a suitable undiscovered island. On 24 June 1739, he was back in Lorient. The Aigle had reached the Ile de France on 9 March.

It was a considerable achievement, and Bouvet has never received from the French, at any rate, the praise he deserves for his endurance and determination. True, he had discovered not a cape in a great bight of the fabled continent, but the lonely island which now bears his name, (2) yet he did demonstrate that habitable land was not to be found over an area of thousands of square miles at the conjunction of the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean - a task he shared with another ship of the Company, the St. Louis, which had sailed from Cape Horn in 1708.

'We had penetrated 12 or 1500 leagues into an unknown sea,' wrote Bouvet in a graphic report to the Company. 'For seventy days, we had encountered almost continuous fog; we had been forty days in the midst of ice, and we had known snow and hail almost every day. Several times our decks and rigging were covered with it. Our shrouds and our sails were frozen. On 10 January, it was impossible to

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(1) Extrait du Voyage, p. 39.

(2) The island, now Bouvetøya, of which Cape Circumcision is the north-western extremity, was rediscovered by captain Lindsay, in the whaler Swan, in 1808. It is now a Norwegian possession.

work our fore topsail. The cold was severe for men accustomed to a warm climate and who were lightly clad. Many had chilblains on the hands and feet, but they were still constantly compelled to tack about, bring to and take soundings at least once a day. I have seen sailors with tears running from their eyes as they handled the sounding line. And all this was in the fine season, and I ameliorated their condition by every means in my power.' It was clear that little was to be expected from such a place: 'the ice, the seals and the penguins, amphibious animals, that we have seen continuously from the seventh degree of longitude until the fifty-fifth, lead me to believe that we have passed close to a continent, but one that would be of little use to Europeans if every year is the same as the ones when we found ourselves there.' (1)

It is no wonder that the Compagnie des Indes considered the voyage to be of little value, and that the matter was not pursued. Bouvet, however, drew up a proposal for a further voyage: by leaving France in August with two ships, he could reach the land he had discovered by January, sail east until March, and go on to southern New Holland and 'Diamonds Land'; in November he would go to New Zealand, remain there until March, and return to France via Cape Horn. (2) His voyage would have forestalled Cook's by a quarter of a century, and he dangled before the Directors the usual allurements of the Pacific - pearls, gold, slaves, spices and new trade routes, but it was of no avail.

Although Bouvet never gave up hope, the plan was too grandiose for his day. Yet the problem of the southern continent remained. In 1755, the Compagnie des Indes was still thinking about an expedition to the area where Gonneville Land was believed to be situated. (3)

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(1) In A. Rainaud, Le Continent Austral, pp. 403-4.
(2) Mémoire sur les Terres Australes, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-28. The mémoire is undated.
(3) Bouvet to Duvelaer, Director of the Compagnie, 8 February 1755. B.N., N.A.F. 9407.

On both sides of the Channel, its existence was hotly debated by geographers; to its discoverer, and to the nation that had sent him, it would bring glory and - inevitably - wealth. All that Cook had proved by 1770 was that it would not be found in the fairly low latitudes of the Pacific which he had visited on his first voyage; those who knew of de Surville's voyage realised that he, too, had pushed back the imaginary continent towards the higher latitudes. But this did not defeat those supporters of Gonneville, who believed that it would be found somewhere to the south-east of Africa.

The man who was to be entrusted, on behalf of France, with the search for the continent was a well-connected (1) member of the old Breton nobility, Yves-Joseph de Kerguelen-Tremarec. Born in 1734, he had entered the navy at the age of sixteen, joining as a garde-marine, (2) one of the many youthful nobles who wore the red uniform of the privileged officer. (3) In 1752, he had gone to Canada; in 1754 he had assisted on a detailed survey of the coast of Brittany around the port of Brest. Promotion came but slowly until the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. He then distinguished himself by bringing back his ship from Santo Domingo with the sole assistance of a fellow ensign, all the senior officers having been killed off by an epidemic of yellow fever. By 1761 Kerguelen had his own command - that of the privateer Le Sage in which he went to the West Indies.

In 1767, in command of La Folle, he went to Iceland on a voyage intended to protect French fishing vessels. He returned there in the following year, this time in the Hirondelle. (4) He was obviously

(1) His sisters - Catherine de Marolles and Marie de Frogeray - were married to influential members of the nobility. The godfather of his eldest son was Charles de Rohan, the famous Maréchal de Soubise. It was to be stated later, and rather unfairly, that he owed his promotions to the influence of his relatives. It is doubtful whether he received any greater benefit from his connections than any other noble in a similar position.

(2) A student officer. The rank was abolished in 1786.

(3) His family had strong naval traditions, and it was probably a relative of his who had taken part in the raid on Rio de Janeiro under Duguay-Trouin, and who was in command of the Bellone, a royal ship which sailed to the Pacific coast in 1716.

(4) Biographical details on Kerguelen will be found in A. Dupouy, Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, pp. 32-106 and in his appeal against his imprisonment during the Revolution, Yves Joseph Kerguelen à ses Concitoyens, B.N.,N.A.F. 9438-174/79.

trusted and highly regarded by his superiors. It was a time of great opportunity for naval officers - Bougainville had set off on his circumnavigation, Wallis, Carteret and Cook were winning international fame by their great voyages of discovery. When Kerguelen had visited Britain towards the end of 1767, on Choiseul's instructions, to investigate British shipyards, he had noted the growing interest which France's neighbour felt in the Pacific. In 1769 Bougainville returned to France; he was only five years older than Kerguelen; he had been a courtier, with little experience of the sea, to whom an expedition to the South Sea had been granted as a royal favour: could not the same opportunity be offered to another courtier, to a man who had a far wider experience of naval matters, and who could therefore be entrusted with an expedition on a larger scale? It is easy to see how Kerguelen's mind was working at this time. He realised that someone would be required to take back to Tahiti the native, Ahu-toru, whom Bougainville had brought with him: this could be a pretext for a voyage of exploration. (1)

Kerguelen wrote to d'Après de Mannevillette, the highly-respected French geographer and expert on navigation in eastern waters. D'Après replied in encouraging terms, and Kerguelen wrote back from Brest on 1 April 1770, outlining his plans in detail. His knowledge of the Pacific was still sketchy - Bougainville had not yet brought out the first edition of his Voyage, and it seems that Kerguelen had not even read de Brosses's book, for, when speaking of Quiros's 'beautiful land' he mentioned only having read about it in a mémoire from the Berlin Academy. However, he was enthusiastic enough to fill the gaps in his knowledge. 'I am still young, and I enjoy excellent health, I have enough credit for my ambitions, and all I need is your knowledge and your learning.' (2)

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(1) Kerguelen to d'Après de Mannevillette, 1 April 1770, B.N., N.A.F. 9341. 'You have seen that my plan was to make some discovery under the pretext of sending back the native.'

(2) Ibid.

D'Après had suggested that an expedition might do well to investigate the possibility of a continent 'south of the islands of St Paul and Amsterdam' in the Indian Ocean. Thus were Kerguelen's thoughts turned towards the southern continent; he had probably not heard of Gonneville before, and he had no objections to raise. 'Since I am only seeking employment and am not discouraged by difficulties, I would devote myself willingly to such a project, and I will put it forward if you will enlighten me on the plan that ought to be outlined,' he replied. 'There are, I believe, two ways of making for the southern land; one would be to call at the River Plate and, by sailing south-south-east, to seek the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, but this route is a difficult one, by reason of the ice that one meets there ... Secondly, one can make for the land adjoining Diemen's Land by way of the South Sea, by turning Cape Horn.' (1) Kerguelen mentioned a third route, one which d'Après had already rejected - via the Moluccas and New Britain. He asked d'Après to recommend an itinerary, and to give him a draft plan for an expedition.

D'Après duly obliged, and Kerguelen submitted a plan to the Minister of Marine. (2) In September 1770, he went to Versailles to discuss the matter (3), but the possibility of a new outbreak of war sent him away to take over command of the Renomée. The emergency however, soon passed, and he returned to the Court. His plan was then approved by the Abbé Terray: the aim was the rediscovery of Gonneville Land, the discovery of the southern continent, and the exploration of the vast area south of the Indian Ocean where no one, so far, had penetrated.

'Captain Kerguelen is instructed that all appearances indicate the existence of a very large continent to the south of St Paul and Amsterdam Islands, that must occupy that part of the globe between

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(1) Ibid.
(2) Kerguelen, Relation de deux Voyages dans les Mers Australes et des Indes, p. 3.
(3) Rainaud, Le Continent Austral, p. 428.

45° of southern latitude and the neighbourhood of the Pole in an immense space where no one has yet entered. It seems fairly established, however, that Gonneville landed there around the year 1504, and remained there nearly six months, during which he was very well treated by the inhabitants.' (1)

Having made all possible efforts to find this land, he was to seek a harbour, taking all necessary precautions to ensure that the anchorage was safe. He was then 'to establish bonds of trade and friendship with the inhabitants', to sail to New Holland, and to return home after a call for refreshments at the River Plate.

The ship allocated to him was the Berryer, so named after a former Minister of the Marine. Supplies were loaded in her sufficient to feed her complement of 300 men for a period of fourteen months, the time that it was estimated would be required for the voyage.

On 1 May 1771, Kerguelen sailed for the Ile de France. With him went the scientifically-minded cleric, Alexis Rochon, who soon fell out with the captain; (2) Rochon found Kerguelen's autocratic manner difficult to bear, and he had his doubts on the Breton's navigational ability. When the Berryer reached Port Louis on 20 August 1771, Rochon left; he expressed the wish to join Marion du Fresne's expedition, which was about to depart for the Pacific, but the Governor of the island, des Roches, was not prepared to let him go, either because he feared that Rochon was a troublemaker, or because he hoped that he might in time become reconciled with Kerguelen, who would not be ready to sail on his voyage of exploration for some months.

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(1) 'Mémoire pour servir d'Instructions', dated 25 March 1771, signed Louis and countersigned Terray, quoted in A. Rochon, Voyages aux Indies Orientales, pp. 204-5

(2) 'I have quarrelled with the Abbé Rochon. He is a scoundrel. He has written against me to the Academy of Sciences.' Kerguelen to d'Après, 8 August 1771, B.N., N.A.F. 9431.

Pierre Poivre, the enthusiastic 'Intendant', welcomed Kerguelen, all the more so, perhaps, since he brought with him munitions for the island garrison. He offered Kerguelen, in place of the Berryer, the Fortune, a ship of 24 guns, and the smaller Gros Ventre, of 16, commanded by Francois Alesno Comte de St. Allouarn. (1) The complement of the two ships would still total over 300, but the smaller ships would be more manageable. To make up the required number of officers, Bernard de Marigny and Jaffan, lieutenants on the Actionnaire, were transferred to the Fortune. On 13 September 1771, after only twenty days, all the preparations were completed, all the supplies had been transferred to the new ships, and they sailed from Port Louis.

It was too soon to go south, and Kerguelen was first required to survey an alternative route to the East, which had been suggested by a well-known officer, the Chevalier de Grenier. In the course of a career largely devoted to the advancement of navigation and of geography, Jacques-Raymond de Géron de Grenier had studied the wind and current systems of the Indian Ocean, and he had concluded that ships bound for India should try to sail just south of the Equator, between the South East Trades and the South West Monsoon. Since Grenier had died before being able to put his theory to the test, it had fallen to Kerguelen to examine the proposed route.

One night, not long after leaving the Ile de France, assailed by a storm, Kerguelen sounded and found only fourteen fathoms, a depth that seemed to indicate that land was near; he therefore anchored but, in the morning, no land was in sight. This unexpected shoal he named Banc de la Fortune, and continued on his way to the Maldives and to Ceylon. The survey took him nearly

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(1) St Allouarn wasin poor health and, during most of the voyage, the Gros Ventre was effectively commanded by de Boisguehenneuc. A. Dupouy, Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, p.119. The spellings Alouarn and Allouarne are sometimes found.

three months, and necessitated his return to Port Louis to refit. His conclusion was that Grenier's suggestion was worthwhile, but that the prevailing winds along the suggested parallel were too weak to make the route really practicable.

The speed with which Kerguelen and Poivre had had the stores transhipped from the Berryer meant that Kerguelen had lost little of the favourable season by his work in the Indian Ocean. He was able to leave the Ile de France on 16 January 1772, sailing practically due south. On 3 February, he was in 41° south and 56°20' east; there were numerous penguins and seabirds around the ships, as well as dark masses of floating seaweed. On the 12th, seeing the birds flying in an easterly direction, he altered course to E½NE. In the evening, a small island was sighted four leagues to the east; the sailor who had first seen it was given a bonus of twenty écus, and forty more were promised to the man who signalled the appearance of the long-awaited continent itself.

At dawn the next morning, the French saw 'perfectly a continuation of land stretching uninterruptedly from the north-east to the south.' (1) According to Kerguelen, they were 49°40' south and 63°30' east of Greenwich. (2) Now, Kerguelen Island, with which this discovery has been identified, stretches from 68°42' to 70°35' east of Greenwich, so that Kerguelen's reckoning is practically five degrees out! It is an enormous error for a period of less than a month. Fortunately, there is no other land along the parallels of 48-49 degrees south for thousands of miles in either direction, and there has never been any doubt about the identification of the coastline visited by Kerguelen. When he returned in 1773, he found 'Austral France' in 49°10' south and 67°05 east of Greenwich, a far more reasonable margin of error. The discrepancy is worth mentioning for one reason - in 1771, Kerguelen had fallen out with

(1) Kerguelen, Relation de deux Voyages, p. 22.
(2) 61°10' east of Paris; ibid., p. 22.

his astronomer, Rochon, and he was therefore working out his position himself; but in 1773, Kerguelen had retained his astronomer, Mersay. We have already seen that, when Mersay died on the return journey, Kerguelen's reckoning rapidly became erratic, and within three weeks the error had reached 4°33'. Rochon's contention that Kerguelen's navigational ability was of the slightest thus receives corroboration. Even des Roches, who was friendly towards Kerguelen, shared this view; when Kerguelen returned, he wrote: 'What would this [voyage] not be if Rochon had not left the expedition? We should know exactly the position of the land that has been discovered, and we could go to it with as much confidence as when we sail to the coasts of Europe.' (1)

The first point sighted by the French was probably the west coast of Ile de l'Ouest, an elongated island off the central west coast of Kerguelen Island. From here, they could see the coastline stretching north towards Cap d'Aiguillon and south towards Cap Bourbon. The two ships then sailed south-south-east towards the latter. The Gros Ventre led and sailed between Cap Bourbon and a small island near it, Ile Mingaud.

The newly-discovered coastline did not appear attractive. There was ice along the rocky shore, fog swirled about the off-shore islands and hovered over the headlands, the sea was heavy and the cold was biting. 'I can affirm that never was felt a cold so bitter', wrote Kerguelen. (1a) And yet, this was midsummer. Was this then Gonneville's pleasant land? Was this indeed the southern continent from which so much wealth was expected to flow?

It was obvious that the answer could not be found simply by cruising off the coast: a landing must be attempted. Kerguelen decided that the Fortune could not approach too closely, because her rigging wasin a bad condition. On 14 February 1772, he placed one

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(1) Des Roches to the Minister of Marine, 20 March 1772, B.N., N.A.F. 9438/78.

(1a) Relation de deux Voyages, p. 25.

of his officers, de Rosily (1) in charge of the Fortune's longboat, and instructed him to seek an anchorage for the Gros Ventre. Disaster struck nearly at once. A fairly strong current was carrying the Gros Ventre towards some rocks and, in manoeuvring to avoid them, she struck the longboat. 'I had just time to seize some oars and to use them to lessen the shock,' wrote Rosily, but his mainmast broke, and he was forced to cut his mizzenmast to break free of the Gros Ventre, and avoid being completely crushed by her. (2)

While Rosily was repairing the longboat, having recovered the mizzenmast and using it as a makeshift mainmast, St Allouarn was sending one of his boats to effect a landing. Rosily noticed this, and hastened to follow it, but the winds were against him, and only the light boat was able to make the shore.

'But since it was very late, and the wind was becoming stronger, the boat could only remain a quarter of an hour ashore - just time to take possession - and we went together to rejoin the Gros Ventre which was awaiting us a half-league away.' (3)

The boat which de Rosily had seen was under the command of de Boisguehenneuc who succeeded in landing on the shore of Baie du Lion Marin, now known as Anse du Gros Ventre. He had taken possession of the newly-discovered land by burying, on behalf of France, a bottle containing the usual document. Landing was something which Kerguelen was never to achieve.

Most of this was hidden from the Fortune which was much further out than the Gros Ventre; visibility was not good and the evening fog was coming down over the land. The night soon followed, dark and stormy, requiring constant manoeuvres exhausting

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(1) Rosily was to have a distinguished career in the navy, becoming director-general of the navy's charts and plans office, and helping to plan some of the early-nineteenth century voyages of exploration.

(2) Extrait de mon Journal depuis le 14 Février que Mr de Kerguelen me détâchât dans sa chaloupe, La Mouche, pour sonder en avant du Gros Ventre, B.N., N.A.F. 9438, No. 79, p.2

(3) Rosily, Extrait de mon Journal, p. 4.

to the frost-bitten crew. In the morning, the fog still concealed most of the coast but, when it cleared for a short time, no signs of life were seen, nor could Kerguelen see the Gros Ventre. The weather worsened, a blustering wind tore away most of the fog, but night was falling. There was still no sign of the second ship, nor of the longboat. On the next day, 16 February, Kerguelen made up his mind to return to the Ile de France to bring back news of his discovery. On 16 March 1772, he anchored in Port Louis.

Meanwhile, when the Fortune did not reappear, St Allouarn, Rosily and Maingaud discussed what should be done. To St. Allouarn, the answer was a simple one - his instructions were to sail ~~to~~ eastwards to New Holland, and to New Holland he would sail. However he first made another attempt to find an anchorage, in accordance with the instructions which Kerguelen had given him; he was unsuccessful. (1) In the night, the damaged longboat sank; fog hid the land; there was still no sign of the Fortune anywhere; presuming that she had sailed to Australia, St Allouarn followed suit, keeping most of the time between the forty-seventh and fiftieth parallels.

The Gros Ventre reached Cape Leeuwin on 18 March 1772; from Cape Leeuwin, the French followed a northerly course, keeping close to the coast. (2) On 29 March, they anchored off Dirk Hartog Island: 'in 25°21' of southern latitude on the west coast of New Holland ... we saw inland a great deal of smoke in one place ... we thought that it was the inhabitants who were signalling to us.' (3).

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(1) Rosily, Extrait de mon Journal, p. 6.

(2) Entries in Extrait du Journal du Vaisseau Le Gros Ventre, 18 March to 30 April 1772. This contains little beyond navigational details.

(3) Rosily, Extrait de mon Journal, p. 9.

St Allouarn despatched Maingaud to take possession of the strip of coast. De Rosily, landing some distance away, climbed a sand dune, and found traces of a corroboree: 'there was in particular one place where it seemed as if people had danced in a circle.' (1) The French had also a brief glimpse of the dingo: 'the men who stayed overnight to capture some large [turtles] saw a big animal of the shape of a dog, which was digging in this place for turtle eggs.' (2) When they sailed, on 31 March, they entered, by mistake, into Shark Bay by what Baudin's expedition was to call Naturaliste Channel. 'We found ourselves entangled in a bay. We stayed there a week, our way being impeded by shoals that we came across as we tacked to get out; at last, on 8 April, we got away, having left behind two anchors whose chains and buoys had broken owing to the strength of the currents. The middle of this bay is in 25° 26' of southern latitude.' (3) While in Shark Bay, St. Allouarn anchored off the northern point of Peron Peninsula, which he named 'Pointe des Bas Fonds.' (4)

The only charts they had were those of d'Après de Mannevillette, a fairly reliable authority on navigation in eastern waters, but less useful in regions such as these, where no Frenchman had yet sailed. St Allouarn was further handicapped by his dead reckoning; he considered his longitude to be erroneous by up to eight degrees - an assumption that was more than justified, for he was nearly eleven degrees out at Cape Leeuwin. (5) On one occasion, he reckoned himself to be in a position that would have been seventeen leagues inside Australian territory, (6) but, in spite of vague charts, ill-health and dwindling supplies, he conscientiously corrected the charts, preparing the way for later French expeditions.

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(1) Ibid., p. 10.
(2) Ibid., p. 11.
(3) Ibid., p. 11.
(4) Freycinet, Voyage de Découvertes, p.186.
(5) St. Allouarn, Extrait du Journal, 17-18 March 1772, giving his position as 34° 17' south and 104° 47' east of Greenwich. Cape Leeuwin is in 34° 20' south and 115° 09' east.
(6) St Allouarn, Extrait du Journal, 28 March 1772.

On 3 May 1772, the Gros Ventre reached Timor where, after some initial hesitation on the part of the Portuguese governor, the French were allowed to land for supplies. On 18 July, they called at Batavia, leaving again on 8 August and reaching Port Louis on 5 September. (1) St Allouarn died soon after.

The voyage of the Gros Ventre stands out as an epic adventure beside the two months' voyage of the Fortune, yet St Allouarn, a modest and ailing man who lost his life because he scrupulously followed his orders, has received little credit for his achievements. Considering the difficulties under which he worked, these were considerable. He was the first to prove that there was no land of any consequence in the southern Indian Ocean north of the fiftieth parallel. Bouvet, Marion du Fresne, and now St Allouarn, had driven back the frontiers of Gonneville Land into the ice-encumbered wastes where Cook was soon to sail. The voyage of the Gros Ventre made nonsense of the claims that Kerguelen was making about this discovery.

'The cold, the fog and the bad weather encountered by M. de St Allouarn during the few days that he had sight of this land, where he even sent his boat, betoken a country hardly suitable for a settlement. This officer, after having covered 200 leagues to the east-north-east from the point where he had landed up to the forty-seventh parallel, then came back to the south up to the fiftieth degree approximately, without having seen any land, which indicates that the part of the southern coastline seen by this officer, far from extending into a more temperate climate, runs southwards as one travels eastwards.' (2)

Kerguelen, however, had at once gone to see Poivre and des Roches, and had given them such an account of his discovery that the Governor immediately wrote to the Minister in Paris in glowing terms.

'If one considers the latitude of the land which has been discovered, one cannot fail to attribute to it the mildest and most felicitous climate ... All that the eyes have been able to see is intersected by woods and greenery, which seems to indicate a country that is inhabited and carefully cultivated.' (3)

(1) Rosily, Extrait de mon Journal, p. 12.
(2) Anonymous note on the voyage, B.N., N.A.F. 9439-90.
(3) Des Roches to the Minister, 20 March 1772. B.N., N.A.F. 9438-78.

Poivre wrote along similar lines. 'M. de Kerguelen has discovered for France, in the space of two months, a new world ... M. de Kerguelen has left in that country that he has discovered the Gros Ventre, commanded by M. de St Allouarn. We shall receive when that flute returns the most interesting details on what we may expect out of the discovery of such an extensive country. I am expecting this ship during the month of June at the latest ... It is not possible that so immense a discovery, so close to the Ile de France, since one can get there in three weeks, should fail to procure great advantages for our colony.' (1)

Who could have put such ideas into the two men's heads? (2) True, the latitude corresponded roughly to that of Normandy in the northern hemisphere - and they had in mind Gonneville Land which had reminded the old captain of that very province. But they could hardly have kept to that line of reasoning if Kerguelen had protested that the land was, in fact, cold and barren. 'Never was felt a cold so bitter.' - and this from a man who had been to Iceland two years running! There can be no doubt that Kerguelen described his discovery in eloquent but mendacious terms. Was he not already writing to de Boynes, the Minister of Marine, 'I have had the good fortune to discover the southern continent.', (3) and to d'Après that he had discovered 'Southern France', and that he believed what he had seen to be only the centre of a mighty gulf? (4)

The sailors who had endured the cold must have had terse comments to make in the taverns of Port Louis about the new country, and the officers may have left behind them a more realistic picture of what Kerguelen was calling Austral France. It is likely, therefore, that Poivre and des Roches may have obtained in time a more balanced view of the discovery; but the Fortune, by then,

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(1) Poivre to Minister, 21 March 1772, B.N., N.A.F. 9439:91.
(2) Although des Roches, not above a little contradiction, stated in his letter that 'thick and continual fog made the region practically impenetrable.'
(3) A. Dupouy, Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, p. 131.
(4) Kerguelen to d'Après de Mannevillette, 14 March 1772, B.N., N.A.F. 9341.

was on her way to France, bearing their letters to the French government, for Kerguelen stayed only eleven days in Port Louis. And, on his way back to France, he composed a mémoire that would not have disgraced Baron Munchausen himself.

Tasman and Drake had discovered only headlands, he wrote, showing that he had now read de Brosses, whereas he had found what appeared to be 'the central mass of the Antarctic Continent. It is a fifth part of the world ... It extends to the east by north-east, offering [the possibility of] settlement under different skies and different climates.' (1)

'The latitude in which this land is situated holds out the promise of all the vegetable products of the metropolis too far away from these islands [Mauritius and Bourbon]. Austral France will provide grain crops suitable for man, building and masting timber ... salt works ... The soil of Austral France, the same as that of the metropolis ... [will grow the same crops]. (2)

The argument was simple - once Kerguelen had set down his belief that he had found Gonneville Land - the southern continent - all the old legends tumbled out, and formed into a logical pattern. The French would, in all probability, find precious stones there - diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, as well as marble and alabaster. (3) Had not some people expressed, in the Middle Ages, the opinion that a different race of men lived in the southern continent? Very well - these may well now be found. But if not they, then probably some of the fashionable noble savages: 'we shall find, at least, natural men, living in a primitive state, without mistrust and without regret, and ignorant of the wiles of civilised men.' (4)

To back all this, there was nothing more tangible than three and a half days spent tacking off a small stretch of stormy, fog-bound

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(1) Réflexions sur les avantages que peut procurer la France Australe, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-93, p. 2.
(2) Ibid., pp. 3-4.
(3) Ibid., p. 4.
(4) Ibid., p. 6.

coast. One would expect any reasonable government to ask for more proof, to enquire from the officers, to cross-examine Kerguelen, his log-book in hand. Where, after all, was the Gros Ventre? But the Old Regime was seldom reasonable, and Kerguelen's report went unchallenged. He arrived in France on 16 July 1772, and was at once promoted to the rank of capitaine de vaisseau, and given the cross of St Louis. His journey had brought him honours and promotion, and he could aver himself well-satisfied, but there was more in store for him - a return voyage to Austral France.

France, at last, was being stirred by the events that had taken place in the Pacific. Bougainville had made it fashionable to talk of geography and anthropology - if one may use the term at this juncture - but Cook had raised Pacific exploration to a far higher level. And Cook was about to depart on a second voyage that could only bring more glory and influence to Britain. Kerguelen's discovery gave the French government a focal point for an expedition to the South Sea. His story went unchallenged because it suited contemporary opinion to believe in it. Cook had rediscovered New Zealand and had explored the east coast of New Holland - but what was that beside the discovery of the southern continent itself? Since the continent no doubt extended much further east, over some of the uncharted areas which Cook would shortly be visiting, it was necessary to act quickly to prevent the Englishman from claiming for his country parts of a continent to which Frenchmen had a prior right, dating back as far as the sixteenth century.

'It is far too important to verify ... the existence of the land which M. de Kerguelen has just discovered in the region of the antarctic circle ... to delay issuing orders for a new expedition to this area. An even more powerful motive, and one which does not allow us even to await for this expedition the return of the flute the Gros Ventre, which M. de Kerguelen left in those parts, nor the details which she will bring back, is the need to forestall the English, or any other nation which, following the rumours that

have circulated concerning this discovery, might seek to disturb in its principle the possession which the commander of the flute will, presumably, have claimed on behalf of His Majesty.' (1)

So ran a preamble to a draft plan for an expedition, but Kerguelen had already drawn up his own plan, not only for a second voyage, but for a settlement, and he now fought to have it adopted.

'I have had the good fortune to discover the Antarctic Continent,' he repeated in his introduction, 'and even to find out that it is suitably placed for the formation of Establishments suitable to command Asia and America.' (2)

To begin with, the settlement would be dependent on the Ile de France, although, 'before six years have passed, I am sure that it will repay with interest the services that it will have rendered it, and that, far from needing the assistance of our islands, it will begin to give, in its turn, a great deal of assistance, to enrich their trade, finally to become their metropolis.' (3) And was there a passing dig at Bougainville in his choice of colonists? 'One cannot do better than to take to our colony, to pioneer tilling and agriculture, some families selected from the poor Acadians who are living today in various corners of France in the most terrible destitution.' (4) Bougainville's attempt to help them had failed: Kerguelen was confident he would succeed.

The expedition should comprise two ships of 64 guns, such as the Rolland and the Alexandre, and a total of 800 men, including Acadians, soldiers, workmen, and crews for two prefabricated boats to be assembled in the southern ocean and used in the colony for fishing and surveying. A pre-cut fort was also to be taken, with four light guns, while Poivre, in the Ile de France, was to

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(1) Armement pour les Terres Australes, 'minute de la feuille pour le Roy remise à Monsieur le 2 Août' (1772), B.N., N.A.F. 9438-100.
(2) Mémoire sur l'Establissment d'une colonie dans la France Australe, B.N., N.A.F. No. 9438-86, p. 1.
(3) Ibid., p. 16.
(4) Ibid., p. 4.

prepare huts for assembling in the colony, 'so that we shall have, a week after our arrival in Austral France, a little town able to receive the colony; some of the small huts will serve as stores.' (1) Kerguelen then listed the goods that the colony would require - utensils, two rams, four ewes, twelve assorted pairs of fowls, a bull and two cows ... To some anonymous reader at the Ministry, the list evoked the image of Jean de la Fontaine's milkmaid daydreaming on her way to market, for some hand has added the marginal note 'Jeannette et le pot au lait'. (2) But the plan is carefully drawn-up and well thought-out - if one overlooks the fundamental flaw: the true climate and the real extent of his discovery. There is, for instance, a note on relations with the natives.

'One must not neglect anything to win over the inhabitants of this fifth part of the world. One must be gentle, make small presents, avoid all violence, have a great deal of patience. One must not imagine that they can be put down by force. Even though there were only two million men in Australasia, all the powers of Europe gathered together would be unable to subjugate them by violent means.' (3)

However detailed the plan may appear, 'there are a thousand details that I pass over in silence; the Court should not worry about them; it must leave them with confidence to the knowledge and caution of the one who will lead such an expedition.' (4) That leader, although Kerguelen clearly expected it to be himself, was not, at first, meant to be him. On 2 August 1772 - that is a fortnight after Kerguelen's return - the ministry expressed its intention to send five ships, - two flutes and three cutters, - none of them under Kerguelen's command. They were to sail singly from Lorient, officially to take supplies to the Ile de France which had suffered heavily in February from one of its

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(1) Ibid., pp. 11-2.
(2) Ibid., p. 9. In la Fontaine's fable, La Laitière et le pot au Lait, Perrette, not Jeannette, fashioned a fanciful chain of profits out of the sale of a pail of milk, but all vanished when she spilt the milk.
(3) Mémoire sur l'Establissement d'une colonie, p. 14. It is noteworthy that Kerguelen uses de Brosses's term 'Australasia'.
(4) Ibid., p. 15.

periodic cyclones; in order to preserve complete secrecy, and thus to make it easier to forestall the British, not even the captains were to be told their true destination: they would open their secret orders after leaving the Cape on the last lap of their voyage, and the winter clothing required by the crews for the journey to the south was to be sealed in bales addressed to the Intendant of the Ile de France. 'The commissioning of this expedition will involve the expenditure of 120 to 130 thousand livres, which, in spite of the present shortage of funds for naval purposes, should nevertheless be sacrificed to the advantages which the discovery ... can procure.' (1)

Kerguelen, however, was pressing for another kind of expedition led by himself and, six weeks later, on 16 September 1772, his wish was granted: 'Following the account which has been given of a mémoire by M. de Kerguelen, the object of which was to show the need for a second expedition to the southern land ... Monseigneur has agreed that there should be allocated for this purpose at Brest the ship Rolland, of 64 guns, and the corvette Iris, of 16.' (2)

The ships were to sail 'in the first months of the coming year'. Kerguelen had asked for a Berthoud chronometer; this request was granted, and an order was issued requiring the one from the ship FTore to be placed at his disposal. It was now not clear whether the instructions issued to the five ships at Lorient were to be countermanded: an order drawn up on 28 September clarified the position.

'Independently of the two small flutes and the three cutters which are to sail from Lorient supposedly for the Ile de France ... it appears essential to prepare for the same destination, and under the command of this officer, a larger expedition which, by sailing from Brest in the first days of the coming year, will reach

(1) Armement pour les terres Australes, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-100, p. 4.
(2) Armement pour la France Australe, 16 September 1772, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-102. The 'Monseigneur' in question is presumably the Minister of the Navy.

the Ile de France at the time when the commanders of the first five ships will have returned there from the Austral Lands, and will be able to give an account of their mission to M. de Kerguelen and of the new discoveries that they will have made in those parts ...' (1)

There were thus to be two new expeditions. The cost, a heavy one in view of the financial difficulties of the navy, was now in the region of 340,000 livres.

Yet the government remained undecided. It was now suggested that, by sending the Etoile, (which could have been Bougainville's old ship) or another of the same name - instead of the Iris, a saving of 60,000 livres could be effected. (2) Kerguelen pressed for a decision; he declared himself ready to sail for the southern land 'at any time or in any season', and warned that an expedition should be ready to leave 'in March or April, or we shall certainly be forestalled by the English who will settle at the gate of the Ile de France, something which would not be glorious for France and which would spell the ruin of our colony.' (3) It also appears that a proposal was approved under which Kerguelen would sail from Brest in January, meet the captains of the five ships in the Ile de France, sail to the Coromandel coast and to Pondicherry, and begin his second voyage to the South Land in December. Instructions to this effect were actually issued in October or early November (4) but later countermanded. Meanwhile, the warrants appointing Kerguelen's officers were issued. At about the same time, the five ships sailed. One, the Faune, was driven back by a storm, having suffered some damage; it was laid up. As soon as he heard of this setback, Kerguelen wrote to the Minister: clearly he was not in

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(1) Orders relating to the second expedition, no title, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-103, p. 1.
(2) Projet de l'association du Roland avec l'Etoile, n.d., B.N., N.A.F. 9438-123.
(3) Kerguelen to de Boynes, 12 November 1772, N.B., N.A.F. 9438-110.
(4) Instructions particulières pour le Sieur de Kerguelen, dated 1772; B.N., N.A.F. 9438-118/9.

favour of these ships leaving, for they might make some important discovery, and steal his thunder; on the other hand, they might return with unpalatable information. 'The season being too far advanced', he wrote, 'to enable the ships, which had left Lorient and which the bad weather has forced back, to reach the southern land before me, I think that it is desirable that they be 'désarmés.' (1) He expressed the opinion that it would be better if, instead, he were allocated a third ship, and asked the Minister to require the authorities at the Ile de France to place one at his disposal.

Again, Kerguelen's request was agreed to. On 8 November 1772, de Boynes, the Minister, wrote to the Governor and Intendant of the Ile de France. Five ships had been despatched, he told them, one of which had returned. However, the others - which Kerguelen thought had also returned - were probably continuing on their way and, since it had now been agreed that it was too late for them to sail to the southern land, instructions were being sent to the Cape by a fast vessel, the Brisson, forbidding them to open their secret instructions. In consequence, they would sail to the Ile de France, where they would hand the sealed secret instructions to the Governor and Intendant for return, unopened, to Paris. The four ships would remain in the colony to engage in trade; the bales of clothing addressed to the Intendant were to be stored, and the copper plates prepared for taking possession of the new discoveries were also to be retained for eventual use. (2)

Theuncertainty which affected the government at this time was the result of approaches by two men - Buffon, the naturalist, and the duc de Croy, governor of Picardy and an amateur geographer. They had both met Kerguelen, questioned him, and come to the conclusion that a mere return to the point reached in 1771-2 would be a waste of time and money. Between them - although de Croy seems to have taken the major part - they persuaded the Ministry that Kerguelen

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(1) Kerguelen to Minister, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-104. Undated, but written before 8 November 1772.

(2) Minister to de Ternay and Maillard, 8 November 1772. B.N., N.A.F. 9438-105.

should complete a circumnavigation in an eastward direction, returning home by Cape Horn. And it was this plan, bolder, more expensive, but much more sensible when one remembers the geographical knowledge of the time and Kerguelen's achievements, which was finally approved in December 1772. De Croy wished Kerguelen to keep to a high latitude and to sail eastwards, avoiding both Australia and New Zealand, and seeking refreshments on the land which Kerguelen believed lay to the south - he was thus in a way calling Kerguelen's bluff, since, if Austral France was all that the navigator claimed it to be, there was no point in going elsewhere for supplies. But neither Buffon (1), nor de Croy, had really any illusions about the climate of Kerguelen's land. 'As I have had the honour of telling you,' wrote the latter to the Minister,' his voyage, which can be very useful, is so hazardous and so perilous that it causes a great deal of anxiety.' (2) Buffon, for his part, had no doubt that a voyage of exploration would be of considerable value (had he not had this in mind many years earlier when he was encouraging de Brosses to write his book?) but only if Kerguelen sailed all the way to Cape Horn.

'His voyage can become infinitely useful by not restricting him merely to return to the strip of land which he has recently discovered, but by leaving from there to sail east in approximately the same latitude as far as South America. There is more than a third of this area that has never been explored, and there is at the same time the greatest likelihood that this space contains land which extends towards the Tropics in a fortunate and warm climate. There would be, on the other hand, nothing to gain by going down beyond the fiftieth degree of southern latitude, because this southern hemisphere is much colder than our northern hemisphere. It is a fact the reason for which doctors still do not know, but it is based on the unanimous report of all navigators. M. de Kerguelen can in one campaign discover all the useful parts of this unknown region.' (3)

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(1) Buffon to duc de Croy, 26 December 1772. m/f in ATL.
(2) Duc de Croy to Minister, 30 September 1772, B.N., N.A.F. 9439-71.
(3) Buffon to duc d'Aiguillon, 12 January 1773, B.N., N.A.F. 9439-92.

One can readily imagine that the two men, having questioned Kerguelen very closely, had reached the conclusion that Austral France was not all that he claimed it to be. Thus it was that Kerguelen's request for a return voyage became, on paper at any rate, a great circumnavigation - France's answer to James Cook. Kerguelen was to carry the French flag across still unknown seas on a voyage that would bring glory to France and to himself. And the instructions were so carefully detailed and so worded that Kerguelen could hardly deviate from them without good cause - there was to be no Gros Ventre episode this time.

'His Majesty having resolved to have verified the southern land of which M. Kerguelen had announced the discovery, He entrusts to him the command of a new expedition which He intends shall carry out this task ...' (1)

True to his word, the Navy minister was making suitable appropriations for the voyage, in spite of the difficult financial condition of the kingdom. 'M. de Kerguelen will sail from Brest on 20 March 1773 with a year's supply of food for the Rolland and the Oiseau, and having in piastres sufficient to buy supplies for another nine months. He will have a Berthoud chronometer for each vessel, a draughtsman, M. Ozanne Cadet, an astronomer, (1A) M. Mersais, a botanist (2), a forge, thirty thousand [bars] of iron, twenty thousand assorted nails, and a distilling machine. These quantities will be doubled so that each ship has the same amount.'(3)

The ships were to call at False Bay, near Capetown, and were to reach the Ile de France by the end of August, in order to leave again on 1 November with one year's supplies.

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(1) As quoted by Kerguelen himself in his Relation de deux Voyages, p. 39.

(1A) Originally, the astronomer was to be Lepante d'Agelet. B.N., N.A.F. 9438-117.

(2) Guillaume Brugnières, of Montpellier, approximately twenty-four years of age.

(3) From the original instructions, Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'Instructions au Sieur de Kerguelen, dated 19 March 1773, signed Louis and countersigned de Boynes. Misc. microfilms in ATL. Also in Projet de Voyage Nouveau. Instructions Particulières, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-111.

'He will neglect nothing that can enable him to obtain the fullest possible knowledge of the soil, the inhabitants, and the manufactures, if there be any. He will draw plans of the harbours, roadsteads or havens where he will land ... He will select a place suitable for an establishment and he will even settle one if he considers it advisable ... He will send back a cutter (which he will bring with him from the Ile de France) to give an account to M. de Ternai of the operations carried out in the austral lands.' After leaving the austral lands, Kerguelen was not to return to Mauritius, but to 'sail eastwards following the 40 to 50 parallels, or further south if he can, as the winds and the weather permit, noting the headlands of the austral lands if there be any. He will go to New Zealand or to a new land further south that may be equally satisfactory to check his position, to get water and firewood. From there, he will sail to, and fix the positions of, the antipodes of Paris, of London ... and carry out all required observations ... He will then continue eastwards endeavouring also to find the antipodes of Stockholm and St Petersburg; ... until, having finally arrived in South America, he will rest and refresh his crew and repair his ships at Valparaiso. Letters of recommendation will be given him for the Governors of this port and of Concepcion. He will stay two months and .., return by Cape Horn.' (1)

In his book Kerguelen quotes slightly different instructions, saying ' I should like to be able to give here a copy of my instructions, but they have refused to give me any copy ... I can only give therefore the following extract.' (2) Instead of going to New Zealand, he was enjoined to 'leave aside Diemen land, New Zealand and the routes followed by previous navigators.' (3) Instead of being instructed to rest and refresh his crew and repair his ships in

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(1) Ibid.
(2) Kerguelen, Relation de deux Voyages, p. 39.
(3) Ibid., pp. 40-1.

Valparaiso, he declares that 'the King forbids him expressly from calling at any port in the South Sea.' (1) His first port of call is to be Buenos Aires, nearly 2000 miles further. This discrepancy is worth noting, for Kerguelen was not so much giving an account of a voyage as pleading a case for the defense. To be forbidden to land in Tasmania or New Zealand or to seek help in the Spanish territories along the western coastline of South America made his voyage far more hazardous. He was endeavouring to claim that his instructions required him to sail from the Ile de France to Buenos Aires - from the Indian Ocean eastwards to the Atlantic, a distance of approximately 14,000 miles - without a single call at any land apart from anything which he might discover in the course of the voyage. In addition to this, the instructions purported to restrict him to cold and stormy latitudes. It would have been more than Magellan had attempted, it would have been simply suicidal - but Louis XV's ministers had no intention of sending Kerguelen to his death.

It was, in fact, a scientific mission out of which France hoped for great things. A footnote to the instructions underlined this fact. 'This voyage is the finest that has ever been undertaken, the one that can bring the most honour to M. de Boynes, bring fame to the nation, enrich geography and bring about the most benefits, and it can be considered as the first circumnavigation of the world, since it is the first in that direction (2) and since it opens an entirely different route, and the most important one, which is likely to immortalise the man who sends him.' (3)

Indeed, the importance attached to this voyage was used as a pretext to refuse a request by Bougainville to lead an expedition

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(1) Ibid., p. 41.
(2) Overlooking Forgeais de Langerie's voyage on the Comtesse de Pontchartrain in 1714 which was by now forgotten.
(3) Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'instructions au Sieur de Kerguelen, 19 March 1773. m/f in ATL.

to the north polar regions. As the Minister of Marine wrote to Aiguillon, who was in charge of Foreign Affairs, 'since the financial situation does not allow me, Sir, to carry out simultaneously the two plans which have been put forward for this year, the one by M. de Bougainville for a voyage towards the Pole, and the other by M. de Kerguelen to continue the discovery of the South Land, whence he will go, on his way back, around the world by the East, the latter plan has seemed to deserve preference, and the two ships which are allocated for this purpose are on the point of sailing from Brest.' (1)

In accordance with Kerguelen's request, three ships had been allocated for the expedition: the Rolland was a brand new ship of the line, (2) built to carry 64 guns, although only 36 were taken in order to make more room for supplies; the Oiseau was a frigate of 32 guns, carrying only 26; the third was to be obtained at the Ile de France for coastal survey purposes. The expedition placed under Kerguelen's command a total complement of 700 men and officers, of which 417 were in the Rolland. It could be agreed that this was far too large an expedition, that the problem of feeding so many men for so long a period at sea, of sailing such heavy ships in cold and often stormy latitudes, faced with unknown dangers, presented insuperable difficulties from the start, which a wiser man would have eschewed. 'Cook, foremost among navigators, would not have succeeded in such an enterprise,' stated bluntly Milet-Mureau, the chronicler of La Pérouse's voyage. (3) The Englishman had been satisfied with a converted collier, and was more interested in the results that his work might bring than in the noble appearance of a ship of the line - and Cook furthermore had a wealth of experience which

(1) de Boynes to Aiguillon, 5 March 1773, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-130.
(2) Orders relating to the Second Expedition, 28 September 1772, p. 2, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-103.
(3) Milet-Mureau, Voyage de la Pérouse, vol. II, p. 4. These may well be La Pérouse's own words.

far outstripped Kerguelen's. Probably, the Breton had fallen between two stools. His original plan was for a settlement in Austral France, not for a circumnavigation, and heavy ships, fully laden, were a necessity if the colony was to be well supplied from the start; the plan grew to include a circumnavigation and the colonisation scheme was dropped, but the original specifications were adhered to: there was no time now to plan the whole venture again right from the beginning.

The instructions had added the final admonition that no one was to be forced to join the expedition against his will - only those de bonne volonté were to be allowed to go. (1) This requirement was observed, at any rate as far as the officers were concerned. One of the best known, de Pagès, a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences and an inveterate globe-trotter, was only too willing to add another adventure to his life. Starting from Santa Domingo in June 1767, he had travelled overland from New Orleans to Mexico City and thence to Acapulco. He had crossed the Pacific on the Manila galleon, disembarked in the eastern Philippines and travelled overland to Manila. He had sailed to Batavia in a Spanish ship, to Surat in an English one, and to Persia in a Moorish one; he travelled to Damascus by caravan and came home in 1771 by way of Malta, Tunis and Sardinia. After his return from the Kerguelen expedition, he joined another to go to Spitzbergen, travelling as far north as latitude 81° 40'. (2)

De Charnière, Kerguelen's second-in-command, was a sick man, and his work fell on the shoulders of de Ligniville, a stolid forty-year old sailor. One of the ensigns, Charles du Couédic de Kergoualer, had sailed with Chevalier de Grenier on his last voyage in the Indian Ocean and had brought back his ship l'Heure du Berger after Grenier had died. (3) The Oiseau was under the command of Lieutenant Charles de Saulx de Rosnevet.

(1) This instruction was apparently added at the suggestion of the Duc de Croy. B.BN, N.A.F. 9438-111.

(2) Voyage autour du Monde et vers les deux pôles par mer et par terre pendant les années 1767-71, 1773, 1774 et 1776 (Paris, 1782). He does not mention Kerguelen anywhere by name. Péron slighted Baudin in the same way when he wrote the account of his voyage.

(3) Dupuy, Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen., p. 135.

Kerguelen had been officially informed of the final plan on 21 January 1773 (1). On 5 February, the duc de Croy sent him his 'Observations pour les Naturalistes de l'expédition de M. de Kerguelen' (2) which contained detailed advice on work to be done in geology, botany and zoology. It was only the first of a series, for de Croy gave fourteen such 'mémoires' to Kerguelen and to those who sailed with him. (3) On 16 March 1773, Kerguelen arrived at Brest and went at once on board the Rolland.(4) There was still no news of the Gros Ventre, (5) but in spite of that, Kerguelen had cause to be satisfied with himself: he had been promoted and put in charge of an important expedition, his credit stood high; if he believed half of what he had written about his discovery he could feel satisfied at having given a valuable stretch of land to his country. Yet, on 14 March, he had written a very strange letter to d'Après:

'I should like to give you only when I return from the voyage I am again going to make to the South Land a few notes and details, since I have no other longitude today than my dead reckoning, and since I now have with me all kinds of scientists. All that I can say is that I have seen land in 60° 40' or 50' of longitude by dead reckoning and stretching according to my reckoning from 48° 30' to 50° 50' of southern latitude ... I passed between this land and a chain of islands and rocks. Darkness and fog prevented me from seeing how far they extended to the South ... [had it not been for the condition of my ship] I would have been able to give you some more important details, but I did what I could. You will use this note as you think best. What is certain is that this land had never been seen before ... There was also snow on the land I saw ...

(1) Auda to Kerguelen, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-115.
(2) B.N., N.A.F. 9438-127.
(3) De Croy to d'Après, 25 June 1774. B.N., N.A.F. 9341. 'S'ils en ont empli le quart, ce seroit un beau voyage.'
(4) Kerguelen, Journal du Roland, 16 March 1773.
(5) Auda to de Ternay and Maillard, 19 March 1773. B.N., N.A.F. 9438-141.

I will send you only on Tuesday the map or sketch because I want to make a copy of it. Show it to no one before your 'Neptune' appears or only to dependable friends ... People have been envious of me over this affair, even at Lorient ... I flatter myself that you will do me the justice of believing that I did my best, I am going to start again.' (1)

And when he sent d'Après the chart, he added: 'I would have liked to have been able to give you more details, but I was not in a position to obtain them.'

This was far from the glowing reports presented to the government seven months earlier. It reveals his uneasiness as he prepares to return to the supposed Southern Continent which he claimed to have discovered. It indicates also that not everyone had taken his claims at their face value; Buffon and de Croy may not have scoffed, but they had their doubts, (2) and d'Après, an old and experienced hydrographer, had obviously asked for exact details. Above all, there was the problem of the Gros Ventre; Kerguelen had had to contend with that almost at once, for de Rosily's sister had written to the Minister four days after Kerguelen's return. (3) She had questioned Kerguelen who had replied that Rosily had been despatched on a mission which had to remain a state secret; other officers gave her conflicting replies, while Rosily's servant, who had returned, replied that, if he told her what had happened to his master, he would be sent to the galleys. In fact, since the Gros Ventre, so far as they knew, had disappeared off Kerguelen Island while the Fortune had promptly returned to the Ile de France, there must have been a number of men on board who must have believed that Gros Ventre had been callously abandoned by Kerguelen, and perished on the inhospitable coast. Those who disliked Kerguelen would have wasted no time in spreading these rumours.

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(1) Kerguelen to d'Après, Brest 14 March 1773; B.N., N.A.F. 9341 - Cn 117/382.

(2) In a letter of advice to Kerguelen of 13 March 1773, the duke had said pointedly 'endeavour not to take islands for the continent. B.N., N.A.F. 9341.

(3) Mme Rosily de Montecler to Minister, Brest, 20 July 1772; B.N., N.A.F. 9438-78.

On 26 March 1773, the Rolland and the Oiseau sailed for the Cape of Good Hope. The night before, the Rolland had taken on board a clandestine passenger, a young girl named Louison whom Pagès, a few days later, calling on the captain for instructions, was to find in bed with Kerguelen. (1) Women had been smuggled before on French ships, but none had been flaunted quite so obviously. Had Kerguelen realised it, he was sailing at an unpropitious time, and young Louison was to play quite an important part in his downfall. Moreover, in Mauritius, Poivre had been replaced as Intendant by Maillard du Mesle, and des Roches by de Ternay. Maillard was a different type of man from Poivre. The enterprising, somewhat visionary pioneer had been superseded by a civil servant, an efficient administrator who had already served in French Guiana. Maillard had been shocked by the hardships caused by the February cyclone in the Ile de France, and he was to devote himself for many years to the problem of the long-term storage of grain. (2) In many ways as able and dedicated as Poivre, he was far more cool-headed, and he saw the need for economies in the small island; there had been too many adventurous and costly expeditions in the past, and the doubts left behind by the Fortune in 1772 had had time to germinate. They had been confirmed when the Gros Ventre finally limped into port in September. Maillard decided to submit a full report to his superior:

'The King's flute, the Gros Ventre, commanded by M. de St Allouarn, which had accompanied M. de Kerguelen, commanding the Fortune, on a voyage aimed at discovering the southern land, returned to this port on 5 September; from her disembarked

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(1) Procès de Kerguelen, testimony of du Couédic, 13 January 1774: 'on envoya un canot à terre à 9 heures du soir qui ramena une fille nommée Louison.' Testimony of de Pagès, 16 January 1774: 'il avait trouvé ce capitaine couché avec la dite Louison lorsqu'il avait été lui demander ses ordres pour le service.' Also testimony of Karuel de Merey, des Loges and of the clerk Forestier who gave Louison's correct name to be Marie-Louise Seguin, (20 January 1774).

(2) The Journal de Paris printed in 1781, the year before Maillard's death, his article 'addition aux moyens proposés pour conserver les farines à la mer.' It is said that, in 1780, bread was still being made in the Ile de France from wheat stored by Maillard in 1774.

MM de St Allouarn and Maingaud, who were very ill, and the other officers, as well as the crew, very tired by this voyage. MM de St Allouarn and Maingaud died soon after landing, and some officers are still very unwell.' (1)

After reporting that two other expeditions, those of the Heure du Berger and La Curieuse, and of the Etoile de Matin, sent by Poivre to seek the supposed island of St John of Lisbon, had returned after fruitless searches, and that the return of the Mascarin, lent to Marion de Fresne, was still awaited, Maillard commented: 'All these expeditions, Monseigneur, which have had as their aim some kind of discovery or the transport of spices, have cost the King prodigious sums, and the colony meanwhile is short of everything, even of bread. I will never understand their calculations ... I hope those that will be despatched by us will make voyages of greater usefulness, and that, at a smaller cost, they will repay the King for the real service they will render to the colony. I shall have, Monseigneur, the honour of sending a schedule outlining the cost of the current expeditions as I have found them, and, at the same time, the current cost after the retrenchments I have made. I can assure you in advance that there will be a very considerable reduction.' (2)

But none of this was known in France until after Kerguelen's departure. As soon as news was received, the Minister altered the instructions, and wrote to Kerguelen accordingly.

'The return of the Gros Ventre to the Isle de France ... changes the plan of the expedition that you are leading. You know that one of the main objects of your voyage, and the one which was most strongly impressed on you, was to find the store ship Gros Ventre and the

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(1) Maillard to Minister, 8 November 1772, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-107. The death certificate of Francois de st Allouarn, 'agé de 35 ans', was appended.

(2) Ibid.

longboat which you had left with her under M. de Rosily's command, and to give to their officers and men all the assistance they might require ... The orders which were given to you now have no point, especially since it appears from all the details which the Gros Ventre has brought back from the country where she landed that it is not worth returning to. It is claimed that by bearing further west, that is to say, towards a point between the newly-discovered land and the one seen by M. Bouvet in 1738 one can hope to make more useful discoveries. The sighting of Nagtegat island, which was included in your instructions will lead you towards this point, towards which the King orders me to instruct you to direct your course, unless from details given to M. de Ternay the latter should consider another direction more appropriate.' (1)

The main part of the voyage - sailing eastwards to Cape Horn - was confirmed. Strangely enough there is no evidence that this letter ever reached Kerguelen. The expedition had reached False Bay on 28 May, by which time many of the men were down with a fever which Kerguelen attributed to the dampness of the new ship; the supplies were damaged, and there was in the hold a 'prodigious quantity of white worms.' (2) Eighty men had to be put ashore (3) and the Rolland was unable to proceed to Mauritius until 11 July. The Oseau meanwhile had sailed for Madagascar to obtain supplies. Shortly after leaving the Cape, the Rolland met with a storm which broke her mizzen-mast and the two top-masts and killed two men. (4)

It was not until 29 August that Kerguelen reached the Ile de France. Kerguelen had failed to bring from the Cape some flour

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(1) Minister to Kerguelen, Versailles, 15 May 1773. B.N., N.A.F. 9438-147. Another letter of the same date to de Ternay and Maillard confirms these instructions. Ibid. 9438-148.
(2) Kerguelen, Relation de deux Voyages, p. 43.
(3) Kerguelen, ibid., p. 43, states there were sixty, but his log (entry of 31 May 1773) gives the figure as eighty.
(4) Kerguelen, Journal du Rolland, 11 July 1773.

obtained by French agents for the island which was short of food as a result of the February hurricane, and this omission strengthened Maillard's low opinion of Kerguelen and of his plans.

Furthermore, the captain appeared to be at odds with some of his officers. De Ternay had been unimpressed by the results of Marion Dufresne's expedition - the Mascarin was about to sail for the Cape on her way back to France, under the command of La Giraudais (1), and it was unlikely that an expedition under Kerguelen would meet with any more success. The rulers of the Ile de France were therefore uncooperative, and relations became strained to a point where Kerguelen no longer spoke to Maillard.

The Breton had, however, clear instructions from the King, which they could not ignore, so that in time he was allowed to take over the small corvette Dauphine which had just come from Bourbon (2) and ~~which~~ was put under the command of Chevalier Féron. But they made it difficult for Kerguelen to recruit suitable replacements for the 34 sick men whom he wished to leave behind, and he had to be contented, so he states, with soldiers who had been whipped and branded for various offences. (3)

In spite of this setback, he was still able to leave on schedule, and to make for Bourbon where he bought refreshments - poultry, goats and vegetables - which he had failed to secure in Port Louis. He sailed first south-west, then due south from the 8th to the 21st November. On 8 November 1773, his position was 30° 50' South by 44° 02 East of Grenwich; on the 21st of the same month he had gone down to 44° 24' South, but his longitude was reckoned at 43° 53' East. Hat it not been for Mersay, the longitude would have been erratic: 'on the 17th [November 1773] in 38° south and 41° east [of Paris], the Berthou (sic) chronometer placed us 2° further west than our estimate.' (4) On the 25th he reached the

(1) She sailed from Port Louis on 7 Sept. 1773, as Kerguelen records in his Journal du Rolland on that date.
(2) Ibid., 26 Sept. 1773.
(3) Kerguelen, Relation de deux Voyages, p. 54.
(4) Kerguelen, Relation de deux Voyages, p. 57.

latitude of the Crozet Islands, and sailed to the south-west of the group and far out of sight of land. On 6 December when he was in 50° south, snow began to fall, and he altered course to SE by E, and then began to sail eastward along the parallel where he had found what he had called Austral France on his first voyage. At dawn on 14 December 1773, land was sighted. It was, as ever, snow-covered and fog-bound. 'The land is announced by a small island, or an ice-floe, perfectly white, to the SE of the compass; soon after, we sighted the main land stretching towards the South West ... In the morning we signalled the two frigates to sail towards land to endeavour to discover a bay suitable for us to anchor in.' (1)

Kerguelen, this time, had reached the northern point of the island. The small, ice covered, danger is due west of Cap d'Aiguillon, and Kerguelen sailed north-east to seek an anchorage.

He thus seemed determined to carry out the instructions, which required him to land; he was on the point of making up for his failure to land during his first voyage. Circumstances favoured him. At two in the afternoon, the Oiseau signalled back that what appeared to be a satisfactory anchorage had been found. Soon a fog came up, so thick that the land was hidden, but it cleared before night fall, and soon they had 'the finest night in the world.')2)

Yet nothing happened for days apart from endless manoeuvring off the coast! Bad days alternated with better ones, the ships tacked back and forth, often completely out of sight of land, and nothing was achieved. At times the cold was so bitter that sailors fainted on deck. (3) Fog continued to hamper their manoeuvres, and the small Dauphine was out of sight for several days.

On 16 December Kerguelen had discovered the small group of islands which lies to the northwest of the northernmost point

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(1) Kerguelen, Journal du Rolland, 14 Dec. 1773.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Kerguelen, Relation de deux Voyages, p. 65.

of the island, and he spent several days manoeuvring between them in the hope of finding the small Dauphine or of sailing into a suitable anchorage. One of these islands is appropriately named Rendez-Vous, the others being Croy, de Ternay, and Roland.

The Dauphine had found what was believed to be a suitable bay sheltered by Cape François, on the east side of the northernmost peninsula of Kerguelen Island. Rosnevetz, in the Oiseau, sailed close to it on 26 December, but on the 30th Féron, wanting to discuss this anchorage with Kerguelen sailed too close to the Rolland, and the two ships collided in heavy seas, though only slight damage resulted.

The weather did not improve, and Kerguelen spent the following week away from the land and often out of sight of it even when the clouds lifted. On 6 January, Rosenevetz decided to take possession of the land, and he sent a boat commanded by his lieutenant, de Rocheguide. The bay where he landed remains known as Baie de l'Oiseau, while the next one, just to the south of it, is called Baie de la Dauphine.

'They found a kind of cul-de-sac running south-east and north-west to a depth of some two leagues and a third, with a width of three to four cable lengths ... several fresh waterfalls cascaded from a small lake on the higher land ... The land being very high, one is sheltered there from all winds except the south-easterlies ... To the south of the small island further in the bay, there seem to be several large headlands behind which there could be some good harbours. (1) Rochegude took possession of the land, as de Boisquehenneuc had done two years before. One bottle was buried, and another was placed in a prominent place. (2) It was the latter that James Cook was to find in 1776 when he, too, made a landing. (3)

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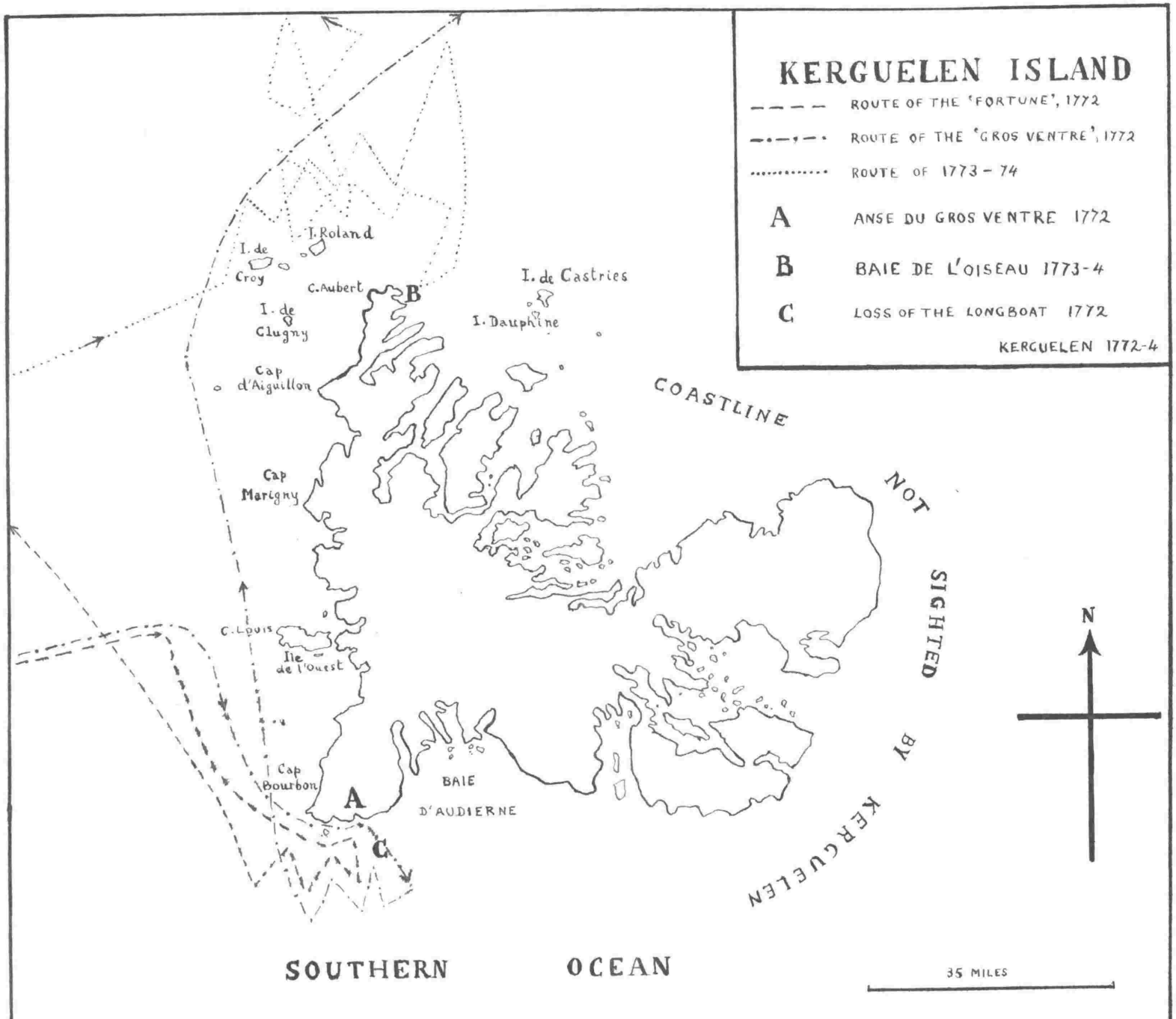
(1) Journal de la Navigation de la Frégate l'Oiseau, entry of 6 Jan., 1774, p. 43.
(2) Procès de Kerguelen, testimony of Saulx de Rosnevetz.
(3) A. Dupouy, Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen.


KERGUELEN ISLAND
ROUTE OF THE 'FORTUNE', 1772
ROUTE OF THE 'GROS VENTRE', 1772
ROUTE OF 1773 - 74
A ANSE DU GROS VENTRE 1772
B BAIE DE L'OISEAU 1773-4
C LOSS OF THE LONGBOAT 1772
KERGUELEN 1772-4
I. Roland
I. de Croy
C. Aubert
B
I. de Clugny
I. de Castries
I. Dauphine
Cap d'Aiguillon
COASTLINE
Cap Marigny
NOT SIGHTED BY KERGUELEN
C. Louis
Ile de l'Ouest
Cap Bourbon
A
BAIE D'AUDIERNE
C
N
SOUTHERN OCEAN
35 MILES

Nº 11

Here now was Kerguelen's opportunity. He had been sailing off the coast for twenty-three days without result; now he could set foot on the island. Yet the account of the days which followed, as given by Saul de Rosnevetz, shows extraordinary indecision. On the 7th, Rosnevetz waited for the Rolland to rejoin him. At nine o'clock on the morning of the 8th, he saw Kerguelen, and informed him of his discovery. Kerguelen asked Rosnevetz to lead the way to it at midday, but they were too far off, and there was no possibility of covering the distance before nightfall. On the following day, the wind was too strong, and they stood off. On the 10th, Kerguelen said that he would like to go to the anchorage, but Rosnevetz pointed out that, as they were 25 leagues from land, there was little likelihood of their getting into the bay by nightfall; he suggested that the safer course was to sail to within a few leagues of the land, so as to be ready to anchor early the following morning. Kerguelen concurred, and Rosnevetz led the way, but the Rolland followed so slowly that the Oiseau was compelled to reduce sail in order to wait for the commander. In the morning, the same thing happened: at 6.30 a.m. Rosnevetz found himself two leagues ahead of Kerguelen, and he reduced sail to enable the Rolland to catch up, but by 7.30 a.m. they were even further apart; Rosnevetz had the maintopsail taken in, but the Rolland had already veered north, away from the coast, and soon Rosnevetz decided to turn back and follow Kerguelen.

On the 12th there was a fresh north-westerly breeze, the sea was calmer, the weather was fine, but soon the Rolland was altering course for the open sea. The weather was again favourable on the following day, but the Rolland was 25 leagues away. Apart from a little fog and some rain on the 15th, the weather remained fine and the sea calm until 17 January. (1) The next day, Kerguelen ordered his ships to sail to Madagascar; the expedition was at an end.

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(1) Procès de Kerguelen, testimony of Saulx de Rosnevetz. Rosnevetz's statements on the weather do not always correspond with what Kerguelen was later to write in his book, but Rosnevetz was quoting from his log and is the more credible witness.

Why had Kerguelen been so reluctant, from the very start, to set foot on what he had once called Austral France and what Cook was to describe as the Island of Desolation?(1) Why had he remained, once more, in the immediate neighbourhood of his landfall? Why had he not sailed along the coast, instead of away from it, when he would have discovered that this land was only a medium-sized island? Why, after nearly five weeks, had he little more to his credit than futile manoeuvres off a relatively small stretch of coast?

Kerguelen himself was to put forward many glib reasons. His supplies were perished, his men were unfit, his ships needed repairs, his officers were incompetent, he himself was unwell. That a number of his men were sick was quite true, but had Kerguelen sailed eastwards soon after reachingCape François, as his instructions required him to do, he would have soon come to the end of the east coast and, continuing his voyage, he would have reached Tasmania in no more than six weeks. Having met the officers of the Mascarin in Port Louis, he must have been aware of the steady westerly winds that would have taken him to Van Diemen's Land, where his men could have rested in a milder climate.

Was Kerguelen frightened of the extent of the mission which had been entrusted to him and which he may not have wanted in the first place? It is difficult to prove, for he had not shown any cowardice during his previous voyages. Nor is it easy to believe that Louison, who was unhappy on board, had prevailed on him to abandon a great expedition into a dangerous unknown that frightened her. It is even harder to believe that Kerguelen was a superstitious Breton, who felt that this girl was bringing him bad luck and was not prepared to risk his ships with her on board. (2)

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(1) 'The land in question ... I should, with great propriety, call the Island of Desolation, but that I would not rob M. de Kerguelen of the honour of its bearing his name.' A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, vol. I, p. 83.

(2) A theory suggested as a possibility by Dupouy in Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, p. 160.

He cannot have been disappointed at finding that his supposed continent was barren and bleak, and even if he had been thus disappointed, he could have seized on the opportunity, offered by his instructions, of carrying out a great circumnavigation that would easily have overshadowed the fiasco of Austral France.

The only rational explanation is that he did not intend, at any time, to carry out his instructions in full. He was interested in obtaining a new command, because, as we shall see, it enabled him to do some profitable trading for his own account, but he believed that no good could come out of a voyage in the high southern latitudes of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, for the very reason that he had seen what they were like when he had sailed south in 1771. Nothing that the men of the Mascarin may have told him would have done anything to shake this belief. But he was caught in a trap of his own making; the Réflexions sur les Avantages que peut procurer la France Australe had boomeranged against him. The circumnavigation would be long and dangerous - no one was better qualified than he was to realise this - and, in the harsh climate of the latitudes he was required to visit, any land he might discover would be as fog-bound and as icy as Austral France. But he could not say so too openly. He therefore determined to do all he could to render the circumnavigation impossible from the start. He wasted five weeks off Cape François, he resisted the attempts of Rosnevetz and of Féron to bring the ships to anchor - because it would force him to come to a decision too soon on the question of the future of the expedition. He refused Rosvenetz's eminently sensible suggestion that they go on to New Zealand to refit, then to Manila for supplies, and complete the circumnavigation later in 1774. (1)

Similarly, because he wanted to be ready to defend his action if challenged, he refused Rosnevetz's request to be allowed to

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(1) Procès de Kerguelen, testimony of Rosnevetz, 14 February 1775.

continue the expedition alone. (1) It was not the sufferings and the sickness brought on by the manoeuvres off Cape François which determined him to go to Madagascar - he had already intimated his desire to abandon the campaign as early as 16 December, and he had written to Rosvenetz on 25 December that he wished to sail to Madagascar. (2)

Kerguelen thus had decided right from the start that the expedition would have to be abandoned. All he did off Cape François was to wait until he considered that Rosnevetz and the other officers shared his views. In this, as we shall see, he was grievously mistaken. He was now fully disillusioned about the supposed continent. If he had truly viewed the coast through rose-coloured spectacles during the brief five days which he had spent off 'Austral France' in 1772, he was now fully disabused. Gonneville had no doubt landed somewhere, but it was not here. 'As for Gonneville's voyage and his putting in at a pretended Austral Land, here is my opinion in four words ...I firmly believe that the southern land where M. de Gonneville landed in 1503 is Madagascar which was only discovered in 1506 by the Portuguese.' (3)

And it was to Madagascar that Kerguelen was now sailing. It took him a month to get there - he arrived at Antongil Bay on the east coast on 18 February; the journey to Tasmania would have taken him about a week more. True, he might have argued that Tasmania would not be very satisfactory as a place to rest his men, but Madagascar proved to be infinitely worse. It was the height of the summer, the weather was oppressively hot, the bad climate at once started to take toll of the soldiers. During the five weeks that they spent in Madagascar, the Rolland lost 14 men 'of fevers',(4)

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(1) Ibid., testimony of Pagès, Asnières, Rosnevetz and du Drennec, 14 to 17 February 1775.
(2) Ibid., testimony of Rosnevetz. Similar letters were written on 9, 13 and 19 January.
(3) Relation de deux Voyages, pp. 93-4.
(4) Procès de Kerguelen, Testimony of Augustin Forestier. According to the surgeon La Porte, there were 18 to 20 deaths due to the fevers of the country which added themselves to the scurvy. Ibid., Testimony of Louis La Porte.

and more deaths were to occur with frequency over a period of three months.

In Madagascar, however, Kerguelen was able to assist Maurice Auguste de Benyowski, a Polish adventurer who was endeavouring to establish a French settlement on the island. Having escaped from imprisonment in Kamchatka, Benyowski had made his way to France and had offered to lead a French settlement in Formosa, but de Boynes, who considered that France had greater opportunities in the Indian Ocean, decided to send him to Madagascar. The French could thus straddle the India route by a fleet based on the triangle Madagascar — Ile de France — Kerguelen Land. De Boynes had vision but also caution, and he placed the unknown adventurer under the control of the unadventurous Governor of the Ile de France. When Benyowski arrived at Port Louis in September 1773 with some 300 men, he found de Ternay and the local colonists in no mood to assist him. The story of previous French attempts to colonise Madagascar had been a sad one, and they visualised a constant drain on their limited resources of food and manpower. Mauritius, it must be remembered, was not self-sufficient. Benyowski nevertheless left for Antongil Bay in February 1774 shortly before Kerguelen arrived there himself. (1) The captain was only too pleased to help an enemy of de Ternay, and he hoped that his action would earn him the thanks of the government when he returned to France. Benyowski helped him with supplies, and the French sailors took part in a raid on the warlike Malagasy. (2)

The *Dauphine* had left on 9 March. Kerguelen himself sailed home with the other two ships on the 29th of the same month. It was on the morning of 1 April that the astronomer Mersais threw himself overboard in a fit of delirium; it was a serious loss to

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(1) See on this episode H.I. Priestley, *France Overseas through the Old Régime*, pp. 121-2.

(2) *Journal du Rolland*, 14, 16, and 17 March 1774. Benyowski was in continual difficulties and eventually in open conflict with the Mauritius colonists, who raided his fort and killed him in 1786.

Kerguelen, and the estimates of longitude became extremely unreliable. On 6 May the Rolland and the Oiseau anchored in Simon's Bay, and the sick were sent ashore. It was there that young d'Aché, nineteen year old scion of a famous naval family, died of a 'putrid fever'.

It was here that Kerguelen wrote his first account for the Minister of Marine in a letter dated 18 May 1774, which presumably he despatched by a home-bound ship. It began: 'You may be surprised to learn that I am at the Cape of Good Hope, but wisdom and experience have left me no alternative ... I could have risked returning via Cape Horn, but there was a twenty-to-one chance that the ship would not have completed the journey.' (1) It was probably true, but it was not the kind of news that the Minister wanted to hear. The two ships sailed from the Cape on 26 June, and, as they approached the coast of France, the storm clouds must already have been gathering.

On 6 September, 'since it was calm and the wind was continuing to drop, we were forced to anchor outside Bertaume, where we dropped anchor at eight in the evening in fifteen fathoms.' (2) Some were to declare later that it was less the weather than the need to avoid awkward questions which caused Kerguelen to anchor here, for two fishing boats came out to the Rolland, and took off two trunks. (3) At the same time, Louison, who had been the cause of much dissension in the Rolland, seized the opportunity to disappear discreetly. Finally, on 7 September, after a voyage of nearly eighteen months, the two ships anchored at Brest.

'The finest voyage ever to be undertaken' had come to an end.

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(1) Kerguelen to the Minister, 18 May 1774. B.N., N.A.F. 9438/152.
(2) Ibid., 6 September, 1774.
(3) Procès de Kerguelen, preliminary enquiry, testimony of Pages, 22 October 1774, of La Porte, 24 October 1774.

It had achieved nothing, not even the discovery that Austral France was really an island - something which was left to James Cook to prove. (1) This time there was not even the continuation of the voyage to New Holland to compensate for the failure in the Indian Ocean; the mighty circumnavigation to be, the enormous expense, the large armament, had resulted in nothing more than incontrovertible proof that Kerguelen's was a desolate land and that his fanciful reports of 1772 were totally unreliable. To this may be added the knowledge that, if Gonneville had landed anywhere in the Indian Ocean, it was certainly not on the island which came to be known as Kerguelen Island. (2)

The extent of the failure was such that many of Kerguelen's colleagues began at once to publicise it within the naval service; it was normal for leaders of expeditions to receive promotion at the conclusion of their voyage, and Kerguelen states that 'the rumour had been current that a promotion of commodores was to be announced, among which I was to be included.' (3) It is not too absurd a claim, since he had been raised to the rank of captain when he had returned from his first voyage. His chances of promotion this time, however, were far less substantial, in view of his neglect of his instructions, and many of his fellow officers saw to it by their talk, that those chances vanished altogether.

In spite of Kerguelen's neglect of his instructions to sail across the southern Pacific and to return home by Cape Horn, it is doubtful whether his reasons that sickness and the condition of his ship made this impossible would have been queried overmuch, had it not been for his personal relations with his officers. He had

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(1) Something of a humiliation when one considers that Kerguelen's second voyage had been planned as the French counterpart of the voyage of the Resolution. Kerguelen sounds unperturbed about this. He writes blandly: 'the land which I have discovered is certainly an island, since the famous Captain Cook has sailed to the south of it.' Relation de Deux Voyages, p. 92.

(2) Now a French possession, still usually uninhabited.

(3) Relation de Deux Voyages, p. 95.

fallen out particularly violently with his first ensign, Marc du Cheyron, a young man of fairly considerable wealth, but of a troublesome nature. By the end of the voyage, the two were no longer on speaking terms, and du Cheyron was taking his meals apart with a handful of his friends. This in itself was nothing very uncommon on long voyages, and it could have been expected that Kerguelen and du Cheyron would have separated with relief at the end of the journey and gone their own ways. (1) Kerguelen, however, was concerned about the threat that the young man had made to complain to the Minister; he decided to get in first and to make his own report on du Cheyron's behaviour. (2) It was a fatal mistake; du Cheyron may not have meant his threat and, had a complaint been made, it could have been ignored, or stifled by the influence which Kerguelen still possessed, As it was, du Cheyron heard of Kerguelen's action, and prepared a detailed memorandum, which he submitted to the authorities. (3)

It was now impossible for Kerguelen to press for the suppression of a document which he had believed - wrongly - to have been in the hands of the government for some time, and for which, in a way, he had prepared the official mind. Attacking at once - he was never slow in putting pen to paper - he drew up a mémoire (4) which expanded the complaints made in his original letter, and which summarised in thirty-four articles both his charges against his former ensign and his answers to du Cheyron's charges. Du Cheyron now replied with a second, far more incriminating document. (5) The feud could no longer be ignored. There were plenty of naval

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(1) Although Kerguelen could not have contemplated with pleasure the prospect of a circumnavigation under such circumstances, this can hardly be claimed as a reason for the abandonment of the voyage.

(2) Kerguelen to de Boynes, 8 October 1774, Naval Library, Brest, MS 171-7/1.

(3) Mémoire de M. du Cheyron contre M. de Kerguelen, Brest MS 171-7/2.

(4) Mémoire de M. de Kerguelen contre M. de Cheyron, Brest, n.d.

(5) Réponse de M. le Chevalier du Cheyron au Mémoire de M. de Kerguelen, Brest, n.d.

officers that were only too pleased to grasp the opportunity to bring down the captain. Furthermore - and it was something that Kerguelen had overlooked - Louis XV had died in May and, in the general re-shuffling of courtiers that inevitably ensued, his influence at court had suffered.

It was decided, first of all, to hold a preliminary enquiry into the charges and countercharges.

'Following such accusations, on the part of a superior officer concerning the insubordination of one of his subalterns, and on the part of this subaltern concerning the public insult which he declares having received from his superior, it would perhaps be necessary to hold a court-martial, but it is believed that it should be suggested to His Majesty that the Commander of the Port of Brest be required, in the first instance, to examine with two or three leading officers, the conduct of Messrs de Kerguelen and du Cheyron; to question the officers who made up the staff of the Rolland and such officers who were in that ship as they will consider desirable, and to make known their opinion whether or not there are grounds for the appointment of a court martial.' (1)

At the same time - and this was far more dangerous - it was resolved to ascertain 'the reasons which have prevented M. de Kerguelen from fulfilling his mission in its entirety according to his instructions.' (2)

The enquiry was held without delay; it opened on 13 October 1774 (3) with the examination of the various officers on the charges made by Kerguelen against Cheyron; it continued with similar interrogations based on du Cheyron's countercharges. The last witness was heard on the 25 October 1774 and, although

(1) Undated copy of a memorandum (part of MS 171), in Naval Library at Brest.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Procès de Kerguelen, verbatim report of the preliminary enquiry.

the officers of the Rolland were reluctant to discuss to any extent the happenings on their ship, enough evidence was gathered to justify a court-martial. (1) Formal charges were laid against both Kerguelen and du Cheyron on 4 January 1775, and their arrest was ordered later that month.

The trial, which opened in Brest on 13 January 1775 has considerable interest on account of the intimate picture it reveals of life on board the ship. Kerguelen was accused of behaviour unbecoming to an officer, of carrying trade goods for his own account, of neglect of duty and of cowardice during the storm off the Cape, and of being responsible for the bad feelings on board. Du Cheyron stood accused merely of neglect of duties, of insubordination, and of improper behaviour towards the passengers who had been carried in the Rolland from Brest to Port Louis. The parade of witnesses began again, this time before the commander of the naval forces at Brest and, later, before his adjutant, the Chevalier de Marigny, (Charles René Louis Bernard de Marigny) brother of the man who had sailed with Kerguelen in the Fortune. (2)

De Ligniville, who was second-in-command for most of the voyage, was unwilling to compromise his chief; a stiff and serious-minded officer, he obviously found the whole proceedings distasteful. It was not until the verbose de Pagès came on the scene that the evidence began to mount. (3) The ship had enough supplies for fourteen months, (4) something which everyone confirmed, but it was not the king's stores but Kerguelen's private goods that had so cluttered the between-decks that the usual sanitary precautions could not be undertaken; this, as the surgeon was to confirm, had

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(1) Report of the Commission, 28 October 1774. Order establishing a court-martial, 15 December 1774. Sundry documents under ref. MS 171 in Naval Library at Brest.
(2) Charles's younger brother was Gaspard Augustin René.
(3) Evidence of 16 Jan. 1775.
(4) The actual quantity of food matters little; but how much of it was fit to eat.

caused the epidemic on the outward journey. The goods that Kerguelen had on board were sold quite openly in Mauritius - de Pagès was even shown a statement of the transaction - and this further alienated the Governor and the Indendant of the island.

Following the reorganisation of the Navy after the Seven Years' War, an attempt had been made to stop captains and officers of the Royal Navy from engaging in trade. The ordonnance of 1765 specifically mentioned this unsatisfactory but widespread practice. (1) Kerguelen had, therefore, chosen a bad time to embark on commercial transactions; he had tried to deny that he had ever done so, (2) but already at the preliminary enquiry, (3) and again during the court martial, (4) the surgeon, La Porte, had admitted that he and Kerguelen had had a partnership agreement covering certain goods brought from Brest and sold in the Ile de France, and that they had fallen out over the sharing of the profits. This sordid little episode revealed again Kerguelen's quarrelsome temperament; it also raised another matter - the proceeds of the goods sold in Port Louis had been used for the purchase of other goods in the Ile de France for resale in Europe: did this mean that Kerguelen knew, even at that time, that it would not be long before the Rolland and the Oiseau were on their way home?

But Kerguelen had not been satisfied with mere 'pacotille'. When the Rolland lay at False Bay, while the men recovered from the fevers brought on by the filthy condition of his ship, he had dispatched the Oiseau to Madagascar not to buy supplies, but to buy slaves - Pagès had bought one himself. René Duclos, the

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(1) A. Dupouy, Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, p. 137. Marion Dufresne, we have noted, was a 'grand pacotilleux'

(2) Kerguelen to Captain Hector, 8 February 1775. Miscellaneous documents, MS 171, in Naval Library at Brest.

(3) Procès de Kerguelen, Preliminary enquiry, examination of La Porte, 24 October 1774.

(4) Ibid., 22 January 1775.

aide-pilote, who had been transferred to the Oiseau for this purpose, had been given trade goods by Kerguelen, who had instructed him to buy some blacks, some bullocks, some rice and native trinkets 'pour curiosité'.(1) Duclos confirmed du Cheyron's allegation that some of the slaves were sold to the Dutch at the Cape on the return journey which, as the ensign had pointed out in his memorandum, was contrary to the law which forbade such sales to non-catholics. (2)

Pagès was a key witness in an episode which brought into question, not only Kerguelen's commercial morals, but his whole fitness as a captain. For it was Pagès who had been on duty on the evening of 11 July when the storm had dismasted the Rolland, and he found it impossible to get any assistance from Kerguelen, who laughed at him when he had reported on the worsening state of the weather. Nearly all witnesses were emphatic that Kerguelen had not appeared on deck until after the crisis was over, and that it had been de Ligniville who had saved the ship. Yet all agreed that Kerguelen was not ill at the time; the implication, reflected in the accusation, was that he was afraid and incompetent, but the probable truth is that he was drunk.

The main point, however, was Kerguelen's failure to fulfil the main points of his mission - landing at 'Austral France' and then sailing eastward. Pagès felt that the Rolland had sailed too far from the coast in bad weather and taken too long to return when it cleared, that in fact Kerguelen never had any intention of landing. He stressed that Rosnevetz had offered to sail alone to Cape Horn and, finally, he alleged that the document signed by the officers of the Rolland, purporting to be the minute of a meeting held on board in January, had been drawn up by the captain himself, and presented to each officer in private for his signature: there had

(1) Procès de Kerguelen, testimony of René Duclos, 20 January 1775 and of de Rosnevetz, 14 February 1775.

(2) Réponse de M. le Chevalier au Mémoire de M. de Kerguelen, misc. documents, MS 171, in Naval Library, Brest.

been no meeting and certainly no discussion. This, which was confirmed by all the other witnesses, placed the responsibility for the abandonment of the voyage on Kerguelen's shoulders; for even if, as he claimed, the sick and the state of the ship made the crossing of the Pacific impossible, it did not absolve him from following the normal practice of discussing such an important decision with his officers. This was all the more important in that the actual condition of the Rolland was perhaps not so bad as Kerguelen believed - the boatswain was to testify to this effect (1) - and that it was by no means easy to ascertain exactly how much food had gone bad, the estimates varying according to the different witnesses from five or six sacks to two hundred and twenty-eight. (2)

As is inevitable with a lengthy enquiry, some of the evidence contradicted or blurred the statement made by previous witnesses, but by the end of January it was clear that both his own officers and those of the Oiseau did not consider that Kerguelen had shown a great deal of enterprise or ability off Kerguelen Island, while most doubted whether he had really wanted to lead his ships into a voyage of circumnavigation; he had undeniably seized on the first pretext that offered to return home, and he had made sure that no one challenged his decision. (3) Above all, he had never shown the probity of singlemindedness that one expects of a commander on such an expedition.

This was illustrated by the episode of Louison, which occupied a remarkable proportion of the time spent on the court-martial. All agreed that she was no better than she should be, and that she

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(1) The ship was 'fort en état de manoeuvrer', J.M. Bienboire, Procès de Kerguelen, evidence of 22 Jan. 1775 .

(2) Ibid., evidence of Gabriel Peins and of Hervey Labouret, 24 Jan. 1775.

(3) It was reported that young d'Aché, who was ill, had signed the document of abandonment only after being ordered to do so and threatened with arrest if he refused. From the Procès de Kerguelen, Evidence of Karuel de Merey, 17 Jan. 1775.

had been smuggled on board by Kerguelen 'for his pleasure'. Kerguelen had induced the ship's clerk to falsify his passenger list to justify her presence on board. (1) Forestier, the clerk, who was greatly dependent on Kerguelen, with whom he had previously sailed in the Fortune, and had, it was evident, spied on the officers, was arrested in March. Would any dedicated commander, entrusted with a mission upon which national honour depended, have risked losing the respect of his officers and causing disruption on board by this disreputable adventure? Kerguelen well knew that the ordonnance of 1765, just as it forbade private trading, laid down that no passenger was to be allowed on board a king's ship without express permission in writing. (2) Even had this not been the case, he should have resisted the temptation thus to flaunt his adulterous amours.

The case against Kerguelen had already become overwhelming by the time Saulx de Rosnevetz appeared to give his evidence. (3) The captain of the Oiseau could not be accused of being involved in the convoluted intrigues and petty squabbles of the Rolland. His evidence was definite without showing any sign of bias against the principal accused. He confirmed that Kerguelen had told him on 16 December that he considered a circumnavigation to be an impracticable proposition. In reply, Rosnevetz had suggested that the campaign be divided into two parts; they should first proceed from 'Austral France' to New Zealand along a southern parallel, obtain refreshments and water in the islands where Cook had been so well received, and sail to Manila; after refitting and replenishing their stores, they should continue their work and sail across the southern Pacific to Cape Horn and Buenos Aires. Nine days later, Kerguelen had proposed that they return to Madagascar, to which Rosnevetz replied

(1) 'Une Jeune fille avec laquelle il [Kerguelen] a vécu scandaleusement', wrote Maillard-Dumesle to the Minister on 23 Oct. 1773. Miscellaneous documents in Naval Library at Brest.
(2) Dupouy Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, p. 143.
(3) Procès de Kerguelen, 14 Feb. 1775.

that he had hopes of finding a good anchorage very soon. On 9 January and again on the 13th, Kerguelen had written to him on the subject of making for Madagascar. This, coupled with Rosnevetz's quotations from his log, indicated beyond real doubt that Kerguelen had little faith in the ultimate aims of the expedition, and was unwilling to make any effort to achieve them.

Was Kerguelen prepared even for some of the more simple tasks laid down in the instructions? The search for the island of 'Nagtegat' is a case in point; he had been required to fix the position of this island on his way to the south. Nagtegat, according to Vaugondy's chart, was believed to be in 41° south and 54° east, ESE of St Paul and Amsterdam, in the Indian Ocean, and it lay on his course to Kerguelen Land. It would be unfair to blame him for not fixing its position, since the island does not in fact exist - there is a Nightingale Island near Tristan de Cunha, 4000 miles further west - but Kerguelen made no attempt to sail near the position assigned for it, and no look-out was posted. Indeed, the officers did not even know that the instructions mentioned Nagtegat until they got back to France. (1)

There was no question that the verdict would go against Kerguelen, although the lengthy procedure dragged on well into April. Kerguelen's misdemeanours, some minor, others more serious, accumulated in the evidence of the 32 witnesses to such an extent that they built up the picture of a lecherous, selfish, ill-tempered and petty commander. An invisible accused was also present at the court-martial - the administration of the French Royal Navy, which promoted men so often because they were well-born, and which in this instance had placed a man at the head of a great expedition without even taking the trouble to verify his extravagant claims.

The sentence was savage. He was sentenced to twenty years'

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(1) Procès de Kerguelen, testimony of du Couédic, Pagès, Roussel (premier pilote), de Rosnevetz, d'Annières.

imprisonment in a fortress, to be dismissed from the service, and required to apologise to du Cheyron for the accusations he had made against him in his Mémoire; Forestier was also expelled from the naval service and banished from all ports and arsenals, being furthermore required to apologise to the shipwright de la Gâtinerie for certain statements he had made against him (1); du Cheyron received one month's imprisonment, while de la Gâtinerie, himself another trouble-maker, was admonished. (2)

The term of imprisonment inflicted on Kerguelen was reduced to six years when the sentence was confirmed. Kerguelen was sent to Saumur and spent nearly four years there, being released soon after the resumption of war with England in 1778. (3)

When his release came, Kerguelen found that, although he could no longer serve in a king's ship, he could nevertheless obtain the command of a privateer. The semi-official expeditions which, in time of war, carried out lucrative raids on British shipping, were eminently suited to his temperament. The officers belonged usually to the merchant service, and would not be tempted to be impertinent towards their noble captain; they were united in a desire for prize-money; there was, in consequence, no dishonour in any transactions of a mercantile nature and, since a voyage was no more than a search for enemy merchantmen, there were no tiresome instructions to argue over; finally, if Kerguelen chanced to bring on board a young wench from Brest or St Malo, no one was likely to object.

Kerguelen's first ship, after his release, was the Comtesse de Brionne, which he took out on a raid into the North Sea in March 1779. (4) But he was after bigger, though not greater things. At the

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(1) Arrêt du Conseil de Guerre; copy dated 15 May 1775 in Brest Naval Library, MS 171-111(5). La Gâtinerie was the 'constructeur-ingénieur', whose main task was to supervise the building of the two small boats.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Memorandum in Brest Naval Library, confirming the order of release dated 25 August 1778.

(4) Dupouy, Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, p. 190.

end of the year, he prepared a plan for a third expedition to the Indian Ocean. Since France and Britain were at war, it was necessary to obtain a passport from the British government. Accordingly, in January 1781, he lodged an application for a permit covering a voyage of discovery (1) in a small ship which he intended naming appropriately, Liber Navigator. He pointed out that the British had received the favour of a similar passport for James Cook. The British Admiralty conceded this, and granted Kerguelen's request as a way of reciprocating the privilege. Kerguelen was thus enabled to set out on a third voyage, although this time it was financed by private enterprise and not by the French Government.

But he was no more fortunate on this occasion that he had been on the first two. His expedition was short-lived;

'M. de Kerguelen, hampered by the obstacles which the officers of the navy were placing in the way of his privateering operations, had decided, since he was unable to fight against the enemies of the state, to embark on a voyage around the world, for the advancement of geography. He had, therefore, caused to be built in Nantes a corvette of ten guns, three pounders, having previously obtained from the English Admiralty a passport for four years.

'M. de Kerguelen left on 16 July 1781 from the roads of Paimboeuf with his small bark, called Liber Navigator, to face all the dangers of such a daring voyage.

'On the following day, at dawn, being forty leagues from the land, he saw to windward a large Enlish corsair of twenty guns, of twelve pounders, which pursued him. M. de Kerguelen awaited with confidence this vessel which was called the Alfret. (2) The corsair swooped down on him, boarded him, threw fifty men at him who were drunk and who cut all the ropes with sword slashes, although no resistance was offered and although the Liber Navigator flew a flag

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(1) '...being desirous to extend the discoveries which he has made in the South or Eastern Sea and to try to make new ones...', states his application, dated 5 Jan. 1780 Greenwich ADM/M/410. The passport was granted on 11 July 1780, see Admiralty Board Minutes, P.R.O. ADM/3/91.

(2) The Alfred, a privateer from Bristol, under Captain Thomas Walker.

of truce. M. de Kerguelen showed his passport, which was signed by Lords of the Admiralty and by the Secretary Stephens. The English captain ignored it and, in contempt of the laws of nations, took over the French vessel and took it to Kinsale in Ireland. M. de Kerguelen returned to France, then went to London where he begged insistently for justice from the Minister Pitt so that his ship could be returned to him. Anything that he could say was useless. He lost his small corvette, the equipping of which, carried out under the sanction of a passport, had cost him a prodigious sum. (1)'

Such was the fate of Kerguelen's last expedition. It seemed as if fate was indeed being hard on the Breton, and that he was paying in real misfortunes the penalty for his earlier misdemeanours. The British appeared to be guilty of a gross breach of faith and, although Kerguelen could in no way be favourably compared to Cook, as far as the importance of his discoveries was concerned, yet he was at least entitled to the same courtesies. ~~as the Yorkshireman.~~ It seemed unlikely that the Liber Navigator would achieve a great deal, nor was it probable that anything she did would represent a threat to British pride or prestige. Why then had Pitt thwarted in this manner the attempt which Kerguelen made to redeem his honour?

The Alfred, whose men may have been less intoxicated than exuberant, had arrested the Liber Navigator because of a technicality: the passport authorised the Frenchman to sail with a ship of 300 tons and a complement of 50 men, but in fact the Liber Navigator was a vessel of 130 tons with a crew of 25. (2) Captain Walker may well have thought that such a tiny ship could accomplish little in the way of exploration in the South Seas, or he may

(1) Kerguelen, Histoire des Evènements des Guerres Maritimes entre la France et l'Angleterre depuis 1778 jusqu'en 1796. pp. 195-6.

(2) Admiralty Secretary to the Commissioners for the Sick and Hurt, 1 October 1781., National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. ADM/M/412.

simply have hoped there was a chance of the capture being declared a lawful prize - the cargo on board certainly seemed to be of value. And so Walker took the ship to Kinsale, there to await instructions from London.

Among the documents seized on the Liber Navigator were some that revealed that Kerguelen's interest in geography and new discoveries was overshadowed by a more worldly concern with mere trade. Copies were sent to the Admiralty and these, as the covering note pointed out, indicated 'very fully the abuse of the passport solicited under pretensions widely different from the Count's practices and ~~the~~ intentions.' (1) The most damning piece of evidence was a 'plan of the voyage' dated at Nantes the 12th October 1780' - three months after the grant of the passport, and quoted in the following paragraph.

'Of all the speculations, of all the enterprises and of all the expeditions, this, which I am going to lay before you, (2) is the best, the richest and the most sure that was ever presented. To depart from France with merchandize that will turn to good account, to convey them to places where (on account of the war) they are at this time most rare and most sought for. To buy at the same places at a very low price merchandize which (by the war) are very scarce in France: behold the plan; what ensures the certain and peaceable execution of it is a 'Passport'.

'Behold in two words the plan of the execution. The King of France, having ordered the ships of his marine not to attack the illustrious voyager, Captain Cook, the Court of England, to acquit themselves to France of this generous proceedings,

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(1) Jally to Stephens, 17 August 1781., Nat. Mar. Mus. Greenwich ADM/FP/24.

(2) This translation, enclosed with the foregoing, is of a copy of a letter addressed by Kerguelen to some unknown partner. Although the French original has not been found, this is so obviously a literal translation from the French (e.g. the translation of 'voici' by the awkward expression 'behold') that its genuineness can hardly be questioned. Dupouy, in his Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, p. 216, states that the financier who provided most of the backing for the voyage was Bethmann, of Bordeaux.

have been willing to grant to M. de Kerguelen a Passport for four years. This Passport, signed by the Ministry and the Secretary of the Admiralty, enables me in this case to make the richest voyage that was ever made in proportion to the stock.

'It is advisable to start from France as soon as possible with wines, brandy, iron, soap, linen, etc., to go directly to the River de la Plata ... there to sell the linen and cloth and whatever is proper ... From the River de la Plata, we will go to the Cape of Good Hope and replace in wine and brandy the weight and room of the goods sold at the River de la Plata. From the Cape we will go to the Iles de France and Bourbon where a bottle of wine ought to be worth 15 ls ... We will return to the Cape where we will discount the bills taken at the Ile de France for 10 p.ct.

'From the Cape we will go to the River of the Plate and from there to Buenos Ayres. (1) From the coast of Coromandel we will go to Manila there to sell the iron of the cargo ... From Manila, we will go to Lima and its environs. We will there sell all the merchandize of the Indies and of China for more than 100 p.ct. profit and we can buy there copper which is much cheaper than iron is in France.

'From Lima, we will return again to the River de la Plata where one may sell either at Montevideo or at Buenos Ayres what remains of the merchandize of the Indies and of China in such a manner that we will find the ship loaded with gold and silver, but not to let a single opportunity of gain escape ... we will employ some part of the funds to buy hides ...

'Behold the itinerary of the voyage which will last only 18 months and which ought at least to produce 20 for one to everyone concerned.'(2)

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(1) There must be an ommission at this point.
(2) Another document refers to an attack on St Helena (PRO.ADM 1/3913) but this was hardly possible for Kerguelen's tiny ship. No reference whatsoever to any geographical aims appears in the captured documents.

This then was the man whom Louis XV had once entrusted with the task of carrying out a voyage that would equal those of Cook; now, under the shadow of the great English navigator, he sought to sail again, with a passport obtained under false pretensions, if not false pretences.

Kerguelen had resilience and unbounded self-confidence. If his last adventure had ended in disaster, there loomed on the horizon a storm that was soon to destroy those who had sat in judgment over him, and ~~him~~ still blocked his plans. The Revolution upturned most things and, in the process, it reinstated Kerguelen,(1) arguing that any 'victime du pouvoir arbitraire sous l'ancien régime' was a deserving case. He then bombarded the officials of the Republic with advice about the defence of Brest and the naval side of the war with England, and he eventually secured a position in the Ministry of Marine. It was a dangerous appointment, at a time when the Navy and the French Republic were in a state of ferment; he soon lost this post, but obtained the command of the Auguste; he was then arrested for a period of eight months under Robespierre, but survived that setback as he had others. He was later placed at the head of a squadron of six ships which were to be used for the despatch of reinforcements to the Indian Ocean; but a political reshuffle deprived him of this command; it cost him, so he complained, 20,000 livres in supplies which he had already loaded for the voyage, (2) but he may have been up to his old tricks and the supplies - if they existed outside his imagination - may well have been trade goods which he hoped to sell in the islands for his own account. Time, anyhow, was running against him, for, in the following year - in March 1797 - he died. (3)

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(1) Decree of 5 February 1793, see Kerguelen 'Adresse au Directoire Exécutif', Histoire des Evènements des Guerres Maritimes. The Minister who signed the decree was Gaspard Monge, the mathematician.

(2) Kerguelen, ibid., p. 392n.

(3) His wife had died in 1789. She, who presumably knew him better than most, had written in her will that she 'prayed to the Almighty to illumine the precious moments that remained to M. de Kerguelen, so that he will indulge in serious reflexions on his conduct.' A. Dupouy, Le Breton Yves de Kerguelen, p. 211-2.

Kerguelen's expeditions typified the drawbacks of the old class structure of the Navy. His irresponsible reports on the value of his first discovery led the French administration to spend thousands of pounds, which it could ill afford. His contribution to Pacific exploration - if one excepts the addition of Kerguelen Island to the French empire - was a negative one; it was he who finally persuaded the French that Terra Australis was a fiction - something which Cook was demonstrating to the world in general, but which the French, so influenced by the Gonneville tradition, needed to have emphasized.

Kerguelen may have influenced in a small way the decision to abolish the aristocracy's privileges in the navy; what he did do was to cause the French government to examine more closely the character and background of the next man they sent on a major voyage of exploration. La Pérouse may not have been a well-connected courtier, but he was honest and capable; that he was given the opportunity to lead the most comprehensive French expedition of the eighteenth century was a direct result of the Kerguelen episode.

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LA PEROUSE

Kerguelen's failure did not prevent others from planning voyages to the Pacific. Within a few weeks of the arrival of the Rolland at Brest, another Frenchman, Louis de Latouche-Tréville, (1) was presenting to the Minister of Marine a plan for a voyage of exploration and circumnavigation.

Latouche-Tréville proposed to sail to Juan Fernandez Islands through Le Maire's Strait, and to explore the area between the fifth and tenth degrees of southern latitude as far as 140° west of Paris. If no suitable port had been found on this route, he would sail to Tahiti, refit and make for New Zealand. From there, he considered that three possibilities offered themselves: to sail to Tasmania and to explore for three months the pracically unknown southern coast of New Holland: to sail to Tasmania, and up the east coast of New Holland to Torres Strait; or to make for the Philippines by way of New Britain. (2)

Sartines, the Minister, did not shelve the plan, tempted though he might have been to do so in the midst of the Kerguelen scandal; he submitted it to a committee which included, among others, Bougainville, Fleurieu, and Rosnevetz. The inclusion of Rosnevetz is interesting for it showed that his actions during the Kerguelen expedition, and notably his offer to sail to Australia, had been appreciated by the authorities.

Latouche-Tréville's plan would have brought him to the northern Marquesas which were still unknown, and it might have resulted in the discovery of the uninhabited Kermadec group

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(1) Louis René Madeleine Le Vassor de Latouche-Tréville, born 1745, garde de la marine 1757, rear admiral 1792, vice-admiral 1803, died 1804.

(2) J. Forsyth, 'Latouche-Tréville and his Proposal to Explore the south Coast of New Holland', in The Mariner's Mirror, vol. 45, No. 2, May 1959, pp. 118-9. Proposal dated 19 October 1774.

north-east of New Zealand, but it was in the detailed exploration of the south coast of New Holland that the real value of the expedition would have lain. There was the tantalising possibility of Australia being divided into two islands by a strait running from the Gulf of Carpentaria down to the south coast. In that case, the western island might be open to French territorial claims. But even if such political considerations did not come into the committee's mind, the south coast of New Holland remained the most important trait of

that, if the Minister does consider my proposal from this point of view [its desirability], he will not entrust to anyone else the task of carrying it out,' he wrote to the Princess de Rohan, his patroness, (1) but the times were against him.

Thus the American War of Independence interrupted France's growing efforts in the Pacific, and it was not until after the Peace Treaty of Paris in 1783 that the question was re-opened. By then, public opinion had become fully awakened to the possibilities of Pacific exploration - it was something in which Louis XVI, who had come to the throne in 1774, was personally interested. In the period between the two wars France had despatched, officially or otherwise, five expeditions to the South Sea; some had failed, but all had served to publicise the Pacific. Philosophers, merchants, littérateurs, ordinary Parisians, all knew, or imagined they knew, a great deal about the world's largest ocean.

The voyages of Cook had contributed not a little to this knowledge and to the growing interest in the Pacific: Bougainville had helped to publicise the Englishman's first voyage by including an account, translated by de Fréville, in his own second edition of 1772; the French public then awaited with impatience the account of Cook's second voyage, as Robert de Vaugondy, acting as a censor's reader, stated in his comment of 16 June 1777: 'I believe that by granting permission for these to be published the public's impatience will be satisfied.' (2) When the French edition of the first published account of the third voyage appeared, the publisher apologised for errata, saying 'this work has been printed with such speed that several mistakes have slipped in.' (3)

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(1) Latouche-Tréville to Princess de Rohan, 5 December 1775, B.N. N.A.F. 9439.

(2) 'Approbation', Voyage dans l'Hémisphère Austral et autour du monde fait sur les Vaisseaux du Roi l'Aventure et la Résolution en 1772...1775, (Paris, 1778).

(3) Troisième Voyage de Cook, (Paris, 1782). Licence to publish was granted on 12 December 1781; Rickman's account of which this was a translation, appeared on 10 April 1781, and was itself a hasty compilation. See F.W. Howay, 'Authorship of the Anonymous Account of Captain Cook's Last Voyage,' in Washington Historical Quarterly, 1921, pp. 51-8.

There were still a few doubters, among them the hapless Baron de Gonneville, who maintained their belief in the existence of Terra Australis: '[The English] pretend to have crossed this region in all directions and, in order to discourage other nations, want to make us believe that everything has been done ... but let us beware, for this language is practically that of the Dutch, who had good reasons to conceal their possessions near the Southern Lands, for their own interest and their own trade which they wished to extend to the exclusion of other Europeans.' (1) When his suspicions were brushed aside, he urged the government to go into the possibility of a partition of Pacific discoveries 'so that each one should share the fruit of his conquests, and that could only be done by a common agreement; it would be a demarcation line, to be arranged between the powers, so that no one should be disturbed in his possessions.' (2) Gonneville asked the Minister to allow him to draw up a suitable plan, although again he received little encouragement; but it may have been he who, at about this time, drew up a plan for a French settlement in Tasmania, a country 'so happily situated that from there one could carry on the most brilliant trade with Africa, Asia, America and a multitude of innumerable islands.' Labour could be obtained from New Zealand, protectorates could be extended over the islands of the Pacific, the natives could be educated and assisted, their chiefs turned into French dukes and counts. (3)

The government, for once, kept its feet on the ground. Settlement in Pacific islands was of doubtful value - even if it could be carried out satisfacorily - for there were few products there of interest to Europeans; nor did a colony in Tasmania sound any more attractive. The time for colonisation was not yet ripe and,

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(1) Gonneville to Minister of Marine, 30 April 1783. B.N. N.A.F. 9439.
(2) Gonneville to Minister, 3 June 1783, B.N. N.A.F. 9439.
(3) P. Roussier, 'Un projet de colonie française dans le Pacifique à la fin du XVIIIe siècle,' in Revue du Pacifique, December 1927, pp. 726-33. The proposal is undated and unsigned; it was probably made some time between 1781 and 1790.

wisely, the government determined to restrict its activities to exploration and scientific research. Britain was attempting no more than that and, if France could produce an leader whose achievements would approach those of Cook, national honour would be well satisfied. If it could be claimed that Kerguelen's voyages - and especially his second one - had been intended as a French answer to JamesCook, then the need for a truly successful and impressive expedition became even more pressing, for Kerguelen's failure had to be obliterated and Cook's later achievements equalled. This task called not only for considerable expenditure and careful planning, but - above all - for a leader of outstanding ability.

There were a number of French naval officers who had distinguished themselves during the war, and it was clear that it was among these that the head of the expedition would have to be selected. It was no longer necessary, furthermore, to ensure that the commander selected for the honour of leading the expedition should be of high birth or popular at court; not only had the navy been liberalised, as a result of the war, but Kerguelen had made it abundantly clear that probity and dedication did not automatically derive from high birth.

Among the officers who were pressing for a command as a reward for their services during the war was one whose exploits in 1782 were still fresh in the public's memory. La Pérouse (1) had planned and carried out a bold raid on British posts in Hudson Bay (2), which

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(1) It will be noted that Latouche-Tréville, in spite of his earlier enthusiasm, gave up his plans. He did not feel aggrieved when La Pérouse was selected to head the proposed expedition: the two men were friends. See J. Forsyth, op. cit., pp. 124-5.

(2) See on this episode, Fleuriot de Langle, La Tragique Expédition de la Pérouse et de Langle, pp. 49-58. Kerguelen was later to claim that it was he who had planned this raid. '1780. I gave to the Minister Castries a detailed plan for the capture of Forts York and Prince in Hudson's Bay. It was carried out according to my plan by captains La Peyrouse and de Langle.' Yves Joseph Kerguelen à ses Concitoyens, B.N., N.A.F. 9438-179. However, it is more likely that the plan was La Pérouse's own.

the British thought well defended by their inaccessibility. With three ships, the Sceptre, of 74 guns, the Astrée, of 36, commanded by de Langle, and the Engageante, also of 36, commanded by de la Jaille, he had sailed from Santo Domingo under such conditions of secrecy that most of his men had no warm clothing for the journey to the edge of the Arctic. On 17 July 1782, the three ships passed Resolution Island and entered Hudson Strait; on August 1, they entered the bay itself, having freed themselves from the grip of the ice barrier. To make up for their lack of winter apparel, they had bought furs from the natives ashore.

On August 8, Fort Prince of Wales on Churchill River was sighted. The governor, ~~Sir~~ Samuel Hearne, promptly surrendered, the furs and stores of the station were taken on board and the fort itself was blown up. The French then sailed to Fort Williams on Nelson River and to Fort Severn, where similar results were obtained. There were no casualties to report.

La Pérouse himself sent an account of his campaign to his mother in succinct terms that recall Caesar's 'Veni, Vidi, Vici':

'I left on the 12th [August] for Fort York, the main British establishment in this bay; I arrived on the 20th, landed on the 21st; everything was taken by the 24th, burned on the 30th, and I had left again by September 2.' (1)

He then sailed back to Santo Domingo, despatching de Langle in the Astrée to Brest with news of the successful raid. It was an operation on a minor scale, but the French, who had suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of Admiral Rodney in the previous April, congratulated themselves over it. The war ended soon after, with no new victories to report, so that La Pérouse's raid remained fresh in people's minds for some considerable time.

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(1) Letter dated 10 October 1782, quoted in Fleuriot de Langle, La Tragique Expédition, p. 57.

His earlier career had been equally distinguished. Born Jean François de Galaud, the eldest son of a well-to-do middle class family of landsmen from Albi in southern France, he had early shown a predilection for a naval career. He had entered the service as a garde de la marine in 1756, at the age of fifteen. His parents had bought for him the domain of La Pérouse, so that he was able to add this title to his name and, as de Galaud de la Pérouse (1), lose the bourgeois taint of his family name.

He had first campaigned off the coast of America on the Célèbre during the Seven Years' War. He fought at Ushant in 1757 and was taken prisoner when his ship, the Formidable, surrendered to Admiral Hawke. Later in the war, having been released, he served on the Robuste; by 1764, he was an ensign, serving on various ships in the Indian Ocean. Thirteen years later, we find him a lieutenant and a knight of St Louis.

The War of Independence brought him the rank of captain. When peace came, it did not bring a setback to his career - as it had threatened to do earlier in the case of Bougainville, whom he resembled in many ways. Less concerned than his forerunner with rising above the class in which he had been born, (2) he had the advantage over the older man that the distinction between the 'red' and the 'blue' officers in the navy had been abolished. This loosening up of the formerly rigid class structure of the service was giving new opportunities to the ordinary officers.

He had furthermore a friend in Claret de Fleurieu, now directeur-général des ports et arsenaux, who was later to write an account of de Surville's voyage. Fleurieu had been responsible

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(1) Société de Géographie, Bulletin, Edition du Centenaire de la Mort de Lapérouse. p. 156. He invariably spelled his name Lapérouse, a variant which has caused some confusion, but it was customary for members of the lower landed nobility to merge the article when signing their name (e.g. Mahé delabourdonnais, the normal signature of the founder of Mauritius). This does not affect the traditional spelling of such French titles, which requires the article to be separated.

(2) His marriage in 1783 to Louise-Eléonore Broudou, the daughter of a petty official, had been delayed for many years by the opposition of his family to what was considered a misalliance harmful to his career in the royal navy.

for the planning of many of the naval operations carried out between 1778 and 1783, and it was to him that La Pérouse had outlined his plans for the Hudson Bay raid. (1) La Pérouse was therefore in close touch with the man who was entrusted with the task of planning the new Pacific expedition and who had the confidence of Louis XVI.

Thus, we find La Pérouse, during 1784, coming up to Paris to seek a command which Fleurieu was endeavouring to obtain for him. As far as Fleurieu knew, it had all been arranged, there was nothing against him and it would be a suitable reward for his wartime exploits. Yet, de Castries, (2) the Minister of Marine, kept him cooling his heels until February 1785. (3)

Had it been touch and go? Had he been kept waiting because the government was not really sure which captain it wanted in charge of the expedition? This is just possible, in view of the rumour which apparently had been current that the command had first been offered to Paul Antoine de Langle, a Breton better connected by birth and marriage than La Pérouse, (4) but that de Langle had refused it in favour of La Pérouse who was his friend and who had been his superior during the Hudson Bay raid. La Pérouse had complained to his wife that the Minister appeared to be in no hurry to grant him a command: the Minister may well have been harassed by cabals and intrigues at the time, and may have been concerned lest the appointment be refused someone who was under the protection of some influential personage. La Pérouse, unlike Bouvet, unlike Kerguelen,

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(1) As evidenced in a letter from him to Fleurieu, dated 1 December 1780, A.N.M. b-4.183, f.111-29, quoted in Fleuriot de Langle, La Tragique Expédition, p. 80.

(2) Charles Eugène Gabriel de la Croix, Marquis de Castries, (1727-1801), first appointed in 1780.

(3) Letter from La Pérouse to his wife, dated 8 February 1785, in Société de Géographie, Edition du Centenaire, p. 175, and from La Pérouse to Castries, 9 February, 1785, ibid., p. 320.

(4) He had married Georgette de Kerouartz, niece of Comte Hector, Lieutenant Général des Armées Navales, who had presided at Kerguelen's court-martial.

unlike Bougainville, does not appear to have ever put forward his own suggestion for a voyage to the Pacific. (1) The idea was not his - it was the government's and probably Fleurieu's.

La Pérouse thus had no real claim to the leadership of the projected expedition; he could have been fobbed off any time with some other command. But Fleurieu favoured La Pérouse, whom he knew and trusted - and Fleurieu got his way.

La Pérouse was an efficient sailor, a popular and unassuming man, a sound judge of men; he had amply demonstrated his ability as a navigator and a commander; it would have been difficult to refuse him this command. La Pérouse received his appointment and immediately requested the nomination of his friend de Langle as captain of the second of the two ships that were to go to the Pacific. (2)

Fleurieu had busied himself with the planning of the voyage; he hurried to and fro, consulting Louis XVI at frequent intervals and noting the king's suggestions. The charts to be used on the journey Fleurieu drew himself, and he prepared copious historical and geographical notes on the problems he wished La Pérouse to investigate. (3) Jean Buache, theGeographer Royal and a close collaborator of Fleurieu's, assisted him in this work, and on other matters, Fleurieu sought the cooperation of learned societies and of various other 'savants'. De Castries was required to write to

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(1) Apart from his plan for the Hudson Bay raid, he had contributed a mémoire on the navy, the date of which is not known. See 'Mémoire Inédit sur la Réorganisation de la Marine' in Edition du Centenaire, pp. 246-54.

(2) It was Louis Bachaumont in his Mémoires Secrètes who had reported the rumour of de Langle's near-selection - and Bachaumont did little more than recording the idle gossip of the Paris salons. There is nothing to substantiate the claim and there is certainly no evidence of any strain in the friendship between the two captains. See on this, Fleuriot de Langle, La Tragique Expédition, p. 70.

(3) 'The instructions and geographical notes which follow [are] the work of the ex-minister of Marine, Fleurieu', Milet-Mureau, Voyage de la Pérouse. vol. 1, p.xj.

the Academy of Science to ask for suggestions on the most useful lines of enquiry. (1)

The Academy rose to the occasion. 'M. le Marechal de Castries having requested from the Academy, on behalf of the King, a mémoire in which would be outlined the investigations which it considered the most important that could be made on the voyage ...' began the preamble (2) that prefaced the memoranda on geometry, astronomy, mechanics, physics, chemistry, anatomy, zoology, mineralogy and botany, which the scientists duly brought forward. (3) The Society of Medicine contributed its quota of questions on the life, appearance and diseases of the native races that would be encountered. (4) The Abbé Tessier, (5) regent of the Paris faculty of medicine and a member of both the Society and the Academy, added an article on the problem of the corruption of water on board ship, putting forward the suggestion that water might become putrefied by the eggs of various insects and, having thus advance to the brink of bacteriology, set out an involved experiment to test his theory by the use of twenty different barrels. (6)

Buache drew up, under his own name, additional notes on geography and listed some of the points which he personally was anxious to have clarified. (7). Buffon, then in his seventy-ninth year, was consulted on the question of a suitable gardener to supervise the collections of plants which it was hoped to bring back. The old man, who had already played his part twelve years before in connection with Kerguelen's second

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(1) Castries to Condorcet, secretary to the Academy, March 1785, quoted by Milet-Mureau, op. cit, vol. I, pp. 155-6.
(2) Ibid., vol. I, p. 157.
(3) Reprinted in ibid., Vol. I, pp. 157-73.
(4) These were read as a paper at the Society's meeting of 31 May 1785 and reprinted in, ibid., Vol. I, pp. 180-96.
(5) Alexandre Henri Tessier (1741-1837) was also interested in agronomy.
(6) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 197-204. The article is dated 19 May 1785, and countersigned by La Pérouse.
(7) Ibid., vol. I, pp. 173-9.

voyage, referred the matter to Thouin, (1) the King's gardener, who appointed young Jean Nicolas Collignon. For the young gardener, Thouin drew up careful instructions, (2) detailing the various ways of storing plants and seeds, listing the implements needed and the material to be taken on the voyage - this included 98 bushells and 53 litrons (3) of seeds, 59 trees and shrubs, 10 reams of paper for pressing leaves, and four notebooks, together with 'two books for the instruction and recreation of the gardener on so long a voyage. (4)

De Monneron, ingénieur-en-chef, (5) who had taken part in the Hudson Bay raid, was despatched to London to fetch an 'Eskimo interpreter' who would be of use in Alaska and, although he failed to return with such a rarity, he met Sir Joseph Banks who presented him with two dipping needles which had been used by James Cook himself. (6) Monneron, as we have already seen, was not entitled to the nobiliary particle which precedes his name in Milet-Mureau's work: born in 1748, he was the younger brother of the Pierre Antoine Monneron who had sailed with de Surville. (7)

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(1) André Thouin, (1746-1824), son of the head gardener at the Jardin des Plantes, succeeded his father when only seventeen. Under him, the Jardin doubled in size.

(2) Reprinted in Milet-Mureau, op. cit. vol. I, pp. 205-40.

(3) A quarter of a peck. Even so, the quantities actually taken on board exceeded the recommendations by 400 lbs.

(4) Milet-Mureau, op- cit., vol. I, p. 235. The two volumes were more instructive than recreative: they were Les Eléments d'Agriculture and La Physique des Arbres, both by Henri-Louis Duhamel de Monceau, (1700-1782), a famous botanist and inspector of the navy.

(5) Like La Gâtinerie on Kerguelen's expedition, Monneron was a naval constructor or shipwright. His task was to supervise repairs to the ship and the construction of small boats for coastal surveys, which work would be carried out by the 'maître-charpentier' and his men.

(6) Fleuriot de Langle, La Tragique Expédition, p. 83.

(7) These details on the Monneron family are from Mr. H.F. Buffet, of Rennes, and to Mr. Robert Allain, chief archivist of the Department of Ardèche.

In addition to the frame of a 20-ton decked ship and of two pinnaces (1), to be constructed in the Pacific for local exploration, an extraordinary variety of goods was loaded on board to be used for presents and as articles of trade with the natives; they ranged from iron bars to buttons of coloured glass; they included one hundred medals with the king's effigy, 52 plumed dragoons' helmets, one million assorted pins, 9,000 fish hooks, four large German organs, twelve smaller ones, two thousand hatchets, one thousand pairs of scissors, twenty-four packets of ~~ringing~~ bells, and 2,600 combs, making up a total of 58,000 livres. (2) The library held twenty-eight volumes on travel, twenty-three on astronomy and navigation, eight works on physics, and sixty-four titles on natural history; it included works by de Brosses, Cook, Bougainville, Hawkesworth, Kerguelen, Feuillée and Buffon. (3) The total cost of the expedition was estimated by Fleurieu to be in the region of 635,000 livres. (4)

Equal care was taken over the selection of the officers and crew. La Pérouse found no difficulty over recruiting; employment was at a low ebb in the navy, and he himself was very popular. He gave preference to men who had sailed with him before: de Langle, his friend, was to command the second ship, Monneron had his place assured, Tréton de Vaujuas was another. (5) Among others, we find Joseph Lepante d'Agelet, (6) the astronomer, who had already served under Kerguelen in 1773; Jean Guillaume Law de Lauriston, great nephew of the Scottish financier; Frédéric Broudou, la Pérouse's young brother-in-law, and the two sons of the financier de Laborde (7) who had succeeded in being appointed to the expedition, one to each ship. La Pérouse had apparently toyed with the idea of inviting John George Adam Forster, who had accompanied his father John Reinhold Forster on Cook's second voyage (8),

(1) Milet Mureau, op. cit., vol. II, p. 10.
(2) The detailed manifests were of value later in identifying the scene of the shipwreck.
(3) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 241-55.
(4) Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 79.
(5) Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 87.
(6) (1751-1788). A former student of the scientist Lalande and a practical watchmaker, he was professor of mathematics at the Royal College.
(7) Jean Joseph, Marquis de Laborde, (1721-1794), not to be confused with Jean Benjamin de la Borde, the author of Histoire Abrégée de la Mer de Sud.
(8) Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 76.

but he decided instead on de Lamanon, who came as mineralogist, botanist, and meteorologist. This plurality of offices was typical of the entire expedition, for nearly all the members of the crew were also tradesmen of some kind - carpenters, tailors or shoemakers, (1) and even the two chaplains were qualified naturalists. (2)

The two ships allocated were flutes of approximately 500 tons, nailed and double-keeled to make them safe for the dangerous navigation which they were about to undertake, though this had the disadvantage of making them heavier and difficult to manoeuvre in an emergency. Previously called the Portefaix ('Stevedore') and the Autruche ('Ostrich'), they were renamed the Boussole and the Astrolabe, (3) altered and listed as frigates.

La Pérouse was handed very detailed and extensive instructions, setting out the route to be followed, (4) but he was at the same time given the greatest latitude in interpreting them - an indication of the high esteem in which he was held, for the government, mindful of Kerguélens neglect, might have been expected to restrict the new commander.

'His Majesty does not intend that {M. de la Perouse} should submit completely to this plan ... The aim of the present instructions is simply to indicate to M. de la Pérouse the discoveries that remain to be carried out or perfected in various parts of the globe, and the route that is considered appropriate to carry out this work.' (5)

Leaving for Brest and calling at Port Praya for supplies of wine, wood and water, La Pérouse was required to cross the Line approximately 29 degrees west of Paris in order to seek the islands of Pennedo de

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(1) Edition du Centenaire, p. 286.
(2) La Pérouse considered that one chaplain was enough for the whole expedition.- Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 74. But presumably the holy men's scientific qualifications caused him to relent.
(3) Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 72.
(4) Dated 26 June 1785 and reprinted by Milet Mureau, 'Voyage de la Pérouse' vol.I, pp. 13-61.
(5) Ibid., vol. I, p. 29.

San Pedro and of Trinidad, not far from the coast of South America, continuing South in the hope of finding La Roche's Isle Grande, thence to South Georgia ~~Island~~ to explore the southern coast before making for Cape Horn. South Georgia had been charted by Cook on his second voyage, but its early discovery had connections with the French, for the discoverer was Antoine de la Roche, a London merchant of French parentage, who, returning from Chile in 1675 and having passed Cape Horn, met with strong currents which drove him off course to the east. He found a land which, from the descriptions he gave of it, was South Georgia. (1) Eighty years passed before another ship sighted this lonely and cold outpost. Pierre Duclos-Guyot, who was later to sail with Bougainville to the Falklands and around the world, was commanding the Spanish ship Leon (2) on its way back from Lima when, having turned Cape Horn and sailed east of Staten Land, he found land to the north-east, which proved to be the unattractive island discovered by La Roche. The latter, however, had sailed from South Georgia in a north and north-westerly direction, and discovered around 45° south a pleasant but uninhabited island, which he called l'Isle Grande. It was this island which La Pérouse was to seek.

La Pérouse was then authorised to call at the Falkland Islands for supplies of firewood and water, and to pass through Le Maire Strait. This would lead him into the Pacific which was to be explored more fully in one voyage than anyone had ever attempted to do before him. There were first a few questions to settle in the south-eastern corner. By sailing along the 57th parallel for some 700 miles, La Pérouse would be able to disprove with certainty the existence of Drakeland, which had been held by some to lie a good distance east of the Straits of Magellan, but which Fleurieu considered, in common with other

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(1) Ibid., vol. I, pp 71-6. James Burney, A Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean, vol. III pp. 395-403. Burney, who quotes Seixas y Loveira, sets La Roche down as a Londoner; Fleurieu stresses his French origin.

(2) Fleurieu is positive on this point, see Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. I, p. 77. Burney, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 136-42., merely states that Duclos-Guyot was on board the Spanish ship. Fleurieu, however, would have been personally acquainted with Duclos-Guyot who was still alive at the time.

geographers, to be nothing more than the west coast of Tierra del Fuego. (1) Then, by veering north, La Pérouse could examine the area where, in 1714, a Spanish captain had, so it was believed, discovered land which might be the island reported to have been reached by Juan Fernandez along the 40th parallel in 1576. (2) This was a part of his instructions to which La Pérouse attached little importance, and rightly so, for the whole thing was very vague and unsubstantiated.

Between Easter Island, where he was required to call, and Tahiti, the rendezvous appointed in case of separation, he was to seek new islands, including some said to have been found by the Spanish on their way to Tahiti in 1773 (3) and, in order to cover as wide an area as possible, the two ships were to separate at the 135th degree of longitude and rejoin at Tahiti. Lous XVI, however, opposed this separation, commenting in a marginal note, that 'the separation should not take place, because it is too dangerous in unknown seas'. (4)

Once again, Tahiti, which plays a most important role in eighteenth century exploration as the hub of the Pacific, was the subject of detailed instructions. Collignon was to leave seeds, trees and shrubs which were to be planted, with the assistance of the natives, in such a way as to afford new resources to Europeans sailing in the Pacific. (5) Bougainville's tracks were to be followed in the Navigator and Friendly Islands, where additional information was to be collected. The western shore of New Caledonia, still unknown, was to be explored, whereupon La Pérouse was to sail to Santa Cruz or to de Surville's Arsacides, where he would be able to check the theories of their identity with Mendaña's Solomons, and

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(1) 'Une vérification qui sera utile pour détruire sans retour une erreur géographique,' see Milet Mureau, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 87-8.

(2) Ibid., vol. I, p. 89. A report about this supposed discovery had appeared in Bernard de la Harpe, Mémoire pour la France servant à la découverte des Terres Australes. B.N., N.A.F. 9341.

(3) Three small islands - Tauere, Haraiki and Anaaa See B.G. Corney, The Quest and Occupation of Tahiti, vol. I, p. 251.

(4) Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 79.

(5) And perhaps also carrying out the Duchess of Choiseul's intention of taking gifts to the Tahitians, which had been foiled by the death of Ahu-toru.

to explore the south coast, only partly seen by Bougainville.

From there he would go to the Louisiades, enter the Gulf of Carpentaria through Torres Strait, about which Cook had left no shadow of doubt, and exploring the unfrequented western coast of Australia, sail down to Tasmania, thus investigating three-quarters of the coastline of New Holland (1) which, in spite of the voyages of the Dutch and the English, was still the subject of much speculation, (2) The next rendezvous was to be Queen Charlotte Sound, in New Zealand, praised by Cook for its excellent anchorages and the ease with which supplies could be obtained.

There was to end the exploration of the Southern Pacific. In March 1787, La Pérouse was to leave New Zealand, sail eastwards along de Surville's tracks for some 3,000 miles, then turn northwards to the Marquesas. After an optional call at the Sandwich Islands, he was to said to the American coast and explore it closely from Port Monterey in California to Mr. St Elias on the Alaskan coast, looking for a possible passage through to Hudson's Bay among the fiords of the north-west coast. From there, he was to travel to Shumagin Islands along the Aleutians and to call at the Russian port of Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka peninsular. La Pérouse was expected to reach it in late September and to return there the following year; he was therefore enjoined to make arrangements with the local authorities for supplies to be collected in anticipation of his return. Meanwhile, he would explore the Kuriles, the eastern and southern coast of Japan, the Ryukyus and Formosa, before refitting at either Macao or Manilla. Making his way back to Kamchatka, he would survey the Korean coast, the coast of Tartary and the west coast of Japan, all of which were completely unknown to Europeans.

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(1) There is no evidence that La Pérouse was instructed to seek a possible strait separating the Australian continent into two islands, as inferred by J.B. Walker in his Early Tasmania, p. 9.

(2) La Pérouse in a letter to Fleurieu 29 March 1785. Quoted in J. Forsyth, op. cit., p. 124n.

The last stage of his journey would take him from Petropavlovsk to near the centre of the Northern Pacific, where some islands were said to have been discovered in 1610 by the Spanish, (1) then to the eastern Ladrones and to the western Carolines on his way to Mindanao, where he would remain for a fortnight. The homeward route would take him through the Moluccas to the Ile de France and to the Cape of Good Hope, when he would have the opportunity of verifying Bouvet Lozier's discovery of Cap Circoncision. He was to reach Brest in the late summer of 1789, having criss-crossed the Pacific and encircled the globe.

The gigantic task that was thus set out required, in addition, a thorough investigation of all the places visited. He was to take note of the forces, both military and naval, kept by the Spanish, the Dutch and the Portuguese at the various ports where he called; he was also to report on the settlements themselves and the extent of the trade carried out. In New Zealand, he was to ascertain whether the British has established a post or were planning a settlement. These political ends, however, were of minor importance beside the scientific work to be carried out. The scientists were instructed to determine with precision the longitudes and latitudes of all places visited, they were instructed to study climatic conditions, to classify and carefully label all native artifacts and clothes, to endeavour to collect plants, such as the New Zealand flax, and to assess their value as food or for manufacture. Friendly relations were to be preserved with all natives, without relaxing the precautions that their reputed inclination to treachery called forth; the artists were to draw their settlements and dwellings and their physiognomy. Finally, it was intended to test the resistance of crews to prolonged navigation on properly equipped ships, inspected and cleaned at frequent intervals.

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(1) Milet-Mureau, op, cit., I, p. 150-1. Fleurieu gives a single reference, from the Transactions of the Royal Society for 1674, in respect of this hypothetical discovery. These islands, Rica de Oro and Rica de Plata, are shown on Vaugondy's map in de Brosses's Histoire. They had already been sought in vain by Unamuno in 1586, by Vizcaino in 1610, and by the Dutchmen Vries and Tasman in 1639, and again by Vries in 1643. See L.C. Wroth, The Early Cartography of the Pacific, pp. 123-4.

The British, Spanish, Dutch and Russian governments were notified, and their co-operation obtained; the Maréchal de Castries, Minister of ~~the~~ Marine, issued instructions that all under his command should give the expedition all assistance asked for and, on 12 July 1785, the expedition was ready to sail.

La Pérouse had to wait twenty days for a favourable wind - it gave the surgeons the opportunity to carry out a more thorough medical examination, and to put ashore six sailors and one soldier suffering from venereal disease, (1) but the voyage proceeded smoothly after this initial delay.

No new islands were sighted in the Atlantic, and La Roche's Isle Grande disappeared from the tentative position it had occupied on old charts - it had probably been some point off the South American coast. 'I am of the firm opinion that Isle Grande, like Pepys' Island, is an imaginary island.' wrote La Pérouse. (2)

Cape Horn, which he reached on the first day of February 1786, was unusually calm. Its peaceful waters misled La Pérouse who expressed the opinion that the Cape's bad reputation was undeserved. 'I turned Cape Horn with much more ease than I could have dared to imagine. I am today convinced that this navigation is the same as is encountered in high latitudes: the difficulties that one expects to meet are the result of an old preconception that should disappear.' (3) By now, the biscuits had become wormy, and flour was running short - La Pérouse decided to make an unscheduled call at Concepcion. There was just time for a search - a very brief search - for Drake's Land.

'On February 9, I was in the latitude of the Straits of Magellan, in the South Sea, sailing towards Juan Fernandez Island; I had passed, according to my reckoning, over the supposed land of Drake, but I had wasted little time over this search, because I was convinced that it did not exist.' (4)

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(1) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 12.
(2) Ibid., Vol. II, p. 43.
(3) Ibid., Vol. II, p. 51.
(4) Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 51-2.

The French were very well received at Conception. The Spanish remarked on the fact that there were no sick on board, a very unusual occurence among ships arriving on the Pacific coast. (1) La Pérouse had nothing but praise for his hosts, notably the Governor, M. Higgins, whose son Bernardo was to become Chile's liberator. The two ships left on 17 March, having stayed there three weeks and, after sailing across Davis' mythical land, (2) they went on to Easter Island anchoring in Cook Bay.(3) The expedition land d here on April 9, and Collignon was able to sow his first seeds on this island.

The sailors appear to have gained the confidence of the natives, who allowed their womenfolk to show themselves and to meet the travellers, (4) but, they, on the other hand, were suspicious of the indefatigable and dexterous thievery of the islanders. They left, therefore, on the following day, leaving behind them gifts of pigs, goats and sheep.

At this stage, La Pérouse, who should, according to the original instructions, have sailed towards Tahiti, turned northward towards Hawaii. He had made up his mind to carry out the exploration of the Northern Pacific first: with the approach of the northern summer it was the obvious move. He arrived in the Sandwich group on May 29, and anchored in Alalakeiki Channel between Maui and Kahoolawe. The natives showed themselves so friendly during his brief stay, that La Pérouse could only explain the killing of Cook to his satisfaction by declaring that the Englishman must have provoked them in some way. (5) He sailed away through Kaiwi Channel going due north. Nine days later, on June 9, being by 34° north and approximately 156° west, the two ships entered a bank of dense fog and, fearing an outbreak of scurvy, La Pérouse ordered the issue of additional clothing, and had cinchona bark (quinine) added daily to the sailors' drink, although this had

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(1) Ibid. Vol. II, p. 56
(2) 'I have covered three hundred leagues along this parallel and I have not seen the Sandy Island'. Ibid. vol. II, p. 75.
(3) Ibid., vol. II, p. 76.
(4) La Pérouse found men and women in equal numbers, whereas Reinhold Forster estimated there were 900 men, but only 30 women. See Forster's Observations, p. 235. The women had been concealed in the underground caves when Cook called.
(5) Milet Mureau, op. cit., vol. II, p. 119

to be done surreptitiously, for fear they should refuse it (1) - La Pérouse, like Cook before him, had to contend with the conservatism of suspicious sailors.

Foggy weather continued to plague the expedition intermittently. On June 23, the morning fog cleared, and the French saw a long chain of snow-covered mountains with, in the background, Mount St Elias towering above the clouds.

They had reached the coast of Alaska; they now travelled slowly southwards looking for a suitable anchorage. The first bay they saw, Baie-de-Monti, did not satisfy them, yet it was in all probability Yakutat Harbour, (2) no mean anchorage. On July 2nd, they found another bay which pleased them more - it was a deep sound with a small island inside it, where they could set up camp free from interference by the natives. They called this Port des Français, it is now known as Lituya Bay. (3)

A camp was set up on the island, and the scientists began their observations, while La Pérouse organised the exploration of the tortuous inlet. The hope was that a river having its source in one of the Great Lakes of Canada might travel westwards to the Pacific, so that one of the many sounds that are found along the northern coast might be an outlet for a waterway as valuable as the St. Lawrence in the east. But wherever this might be, it was not in Lituya Bay, for he soon found the fiords closed by waterfalls, glaciers, or sheer rock faces, so that 'in a few hours we completed our trip into the interior of America.' (4)

It was a dismal place, cold though this was the summer season, and subject to sudden storms. The natives were unprepossessing, but willing to sell fish and furs to the French; the local chief went so far as to offer for sale the island on which the observatory had been built, 'reserving, no doubt, to himself and to the other Indians, the right to rob us there.' (5) Without much faith in the transaction, La Pérouse

(1) Ibid, vol. II, p. 132.
(2) Fleuriot de Langle identifies Baie de Monti with Lituya Bay; this is an unusual slip. La Tragique Expédition, p. 125n.
(3) It was still called Frenchmen's Bay until the beginning of the present century. Ibid., p. 134-5.
(4) Milet Mureau in op. cit., vol. II, p. 161.
(5) Ibid., vol. II, p. 161.

agreed to pay the price in clothes, nails and implements. The natives were as great thieves as the Easter Islanders had been and, without the 'Eskimo Interpreter' whom Monneron had hoped to find in London, it was not easy to communicate with them. Law and d'Arbaud, a volontaire from the Boussole, while on duty at the observatory, had been robbed of a musket, of their clothes, and of a notebook in which the astronomical observations had been entered, all from the tent in which they had been sleeping.The loss of the notebook and the risk of further thefts negated the value of the observatory, which was abandoned.

La Pérouse could feel no sympathy for the local natives who seemed to have no redeeming features, an impression which the Englishman Dixon who explored the same area during the following year seemed to share.

'I am willing to admit that it is impossible for a society to exist without some virtues,' wrote La Pérouse, 'but I am forced to say that I have not had the wisdom to notice any: always quarreling among themselves, indifferent towards their children, real tyrants towards their wives, who are condemned to the most arduous work. I have been unable to observe anything among these people that would enable me to soften the colours of this picture.' (1)

On July 13th, tragedy struck. The barge and the two pinnaces had gone to sound not far from the narrow mouth of the bay when a rising squall caught the pinnaces; six officers and fifteen men were lost, including the two young Labordes, inseparable brothers who, although appointed to different ships, never missed an occasion to fish, hunt or explore together. La Pérouse erected a simple monument on the island, which he named Cenotaph Island, placing underneath it a bottle with a message setting out the tragedy. After wasting a few more

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11) Ibid., vol. II, p. 195. Cf. G. Dixon: 'Their habitations are the most wretched hovels that can possibly be conceived ... the inside of these dwellings exhibits a complete picture of dirt and filth, indolence and laziness.' A Voyage round the World, p. 172-3.

days in the hope - a vain one - that someone might have been cast ashore, they left without regrets on 30 July.

La Pérouse had realised by now how impossible was the task he had been set: the many indentations and sounds of the coast would require months of careful exploration, if the problem of the waterway was ever to be solved. Even a broad but reliable charting of the foggy coastline would be a slow process: it was to take Vancouver three successive seasons to give a clear picture of the north-west coast. La Pérouse had to keep his sense of proportion, for his voyage was one of general Pacific exploration; already he had been delayed by the tragic setback in Lituya Bay, and this 'had forced me to alter my plan of navigation along the coast of America.' (1) It was now necessary for him to curtail his work in the north-eastern Pacific, in order to reach the north-western area during the summer of the following year. He was satisfied to follow the coastline steadily south, charting the main features, adding considerably to Europe's scant knowledge of the area and guessing correctly that he was following a line of off-shore islands and not the American continent itself. He entered Queen Charlotte Sound, but the season was advanced and fog was continually troublesome, so that he turned away from the mighty labyrinth and sailed down the west coast of Vancouver Island, hastening towards Monterey, where he hoped to get wood and water, if not other supplies, before crossing to Manila. On September 14th, he finally reached the Spanish settlement.

Ten days later, the ships sailed across the Pacific for Asia - a crossing that very nearly ended the whole venture in sudden disaster. In 23° 34° North and 164° 32' West on 5 November, they discovered an uninhabited island which they named Necker Island, after the French Minister of Finance who made the final attempt of the Ancien Régime

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(1) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. II, p. 214.

to save France from bankruptcy. (1) Soon after, in 23° 45' and 165° 50', they only narrowly avoided striking a low sandy shoal, similarly uncharted, which they called 'Basses des Frégates Françaises.' Necker Island, French Frigates Shoal, and La Pérouse Pinnacle, which is a high rock rising near the shoals, lie to the north-west of the Hawaii group.

A month after this, having sailed across the empty immensity of the central Pacific, the expedition was approaching the Marianas. 'For several weeks, we had been talking about the turtles and coconuts that we flattered ourselves we would find on one of the Marianas.' On 15 December, the ships were in sight of Asuncion, one of the most northerly of the group, but as unprepossessing an island as can be found even after a long navigation: 'the most vivid imagination would depict only with difficulty a more horrible place ... M. Boutin informed me that the island was a thousand times more horrible than it appeared a quarter of a league away.' (2) The sailors got a hundred of the eagerly-awaited coconuts, in addition to some shells and plants for the naturalists.

On December 28th they sighted the Bashi Islands, where de Surville had called nearly twenty years earlier. On 2 January 1787 they anchored in Macao.

There, most of the furs they had obtained in Lituya Bay were sold, the proceeds being shared among the crew. The best furs were sent to France for the queen, together with the journals and chartsof the voyage so far, all under the care of the Astrolabe's naturalist Dufresne. (3) In Macao, La Pérouse had found a French flute, commanded by M. de Richery, under the orders of the commander of the French India Naval Station, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, who was later to play a vital part in the drama of the Pérouses expedition. (4)

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(1) Necker had also been a Director of the Compagnie des Indes Orientales. When La Pérouse was crossing the Pacific, Necker was about to incur royal displeasure and banishment, but his popularity with the ordinary people was considerable and growing daily.
(2) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 308-9.
(3) La Pérouse to Castries, 26 January 1787, quoted in Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 159.
(4) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. II, p. 316.

La Pérouse remained in Macao for just over a month, leaving on 5 February for Manila, having taken six Chinese sailors on board each ship, to make up for some of the losses sustained at Lituya Bay. (1) His presence in China had been particularly beneficial for the French. They were having difficulties with Chinese traders, and the visit of the two frigates, although not intended as such, was a valuable prop for d'Entrecasteaux's policy of 'showing the flag'. The latter arrived soon after in Canton river in the Résolution, accompanied by the Subtile, having sailed from Batavia into the Pacific and reached China through the little-known seas east of the Philippines, a feat on its own. D'Entrecasteaux, learning of La Pérouse's presence in Manila, sent him the Castries with offers of help; La Pérouse gladly took from it four men and one officer for each of his ships. He had lost only two men from illness during the nineteen months that he had been at sea. One, a servant, had died of tuberculosis between Chile and Easter Island; the other, d'Aigremont, an ensign on board the Astrolable, had just died of dysentery. But the tragedy at Lituya Bay had cost the lives of twenty-one officers and men. Furthermore, M. de St Céran, garde de la marine on the Boussole, was in poor health, and Monge, the astronomer, had been put ashore at Tenerife right at the start of the voyage, also because of ill health.

Leaving Manila on Easter Monday 1787, La Pérouse sailed north to Formosa, which was at the time in revolt against the Chinese. The weather was bad and, having gone as far as the Pescadores, he decided not to proceed any further into Formosa Strait. Sailing between the east coast of Formosa and the south-western Ryukyus, he went north as far as Quelpart Island (2) at the entrance of the Straits of Korea. The Korean coast was known only from the maps of missionaries, and

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(1) Ibid., vol. II, p. 332.
(2) Ibid., vol. II, pp. 384-6. Quelpart is modern Cheju-Do.

these were largely based on hearsay; it was the first time that a European ship had an opportunity of verifying the charts, but currents, contrary winds and fog did not make the task any easier. On 29 May, Ensign Boutin endeavoured to land on Ullung Do, which they had named Dagelet Island, after Lepante d'Agelet, who had been the first to see it, but the currents made this too dangerous and he was forced to turn back. (1) The winds now helped the ship to sail to the coast of Honshu, and La Pérouse came so near to the closed Japanese empire that he was able to distinguish the fields and the houses. But it was not Japan that he had come to see.

'The coast of Japan, which stretches for 60 miles east of Cape Noto [Rokko] and the constant fog that covers these islands would perhaps have forced me to spend the rest of the season following and charting the island of Niphon as far as cape Sangaar [Tsugaru]. We had a far vaster field of discovery to cover on the coast of Tartary and in the straits of Tessoy. I thought therefore, that I should not lose a moment in getting there promptly; I had had anyhow no other aim in my examination of the coast of Japan than to assign to the Sea of Tartary its true northern and southern limits.' (2)

He therefore veered back towards the continent, and started on 11 June his survey of the north-east of Korea. Five days later, the French found themselves in a strait with the coast of Tartary stretching from the west to the north-east, and a great land mass from the south-west to the south-east. They could discern mountains and gullies along the coast of the unknown land but, as they were trying to puzzle out how they could have entered such a narrow strait in the night without noticing it, the whole thing suddenly dissolved before their eyes:

'The most extraordinary fog bank that I have ever seen had caused this error: we saw it dissolve, its shapes, its shades rose and lost themselves among the clouds, and we still had enough light left to ensure that there remained no doubt about the non-existence of this fantastic land ... the most complete illusion that I have ever witnessed in all my sailing days.' (3)

(1) Ibid., vol. II, p. 392. The name Dagelet is still found on some modern charts.
(2) Ibid., vol. III, p. 6.
(3) Ibid., vol. III, p. 10.

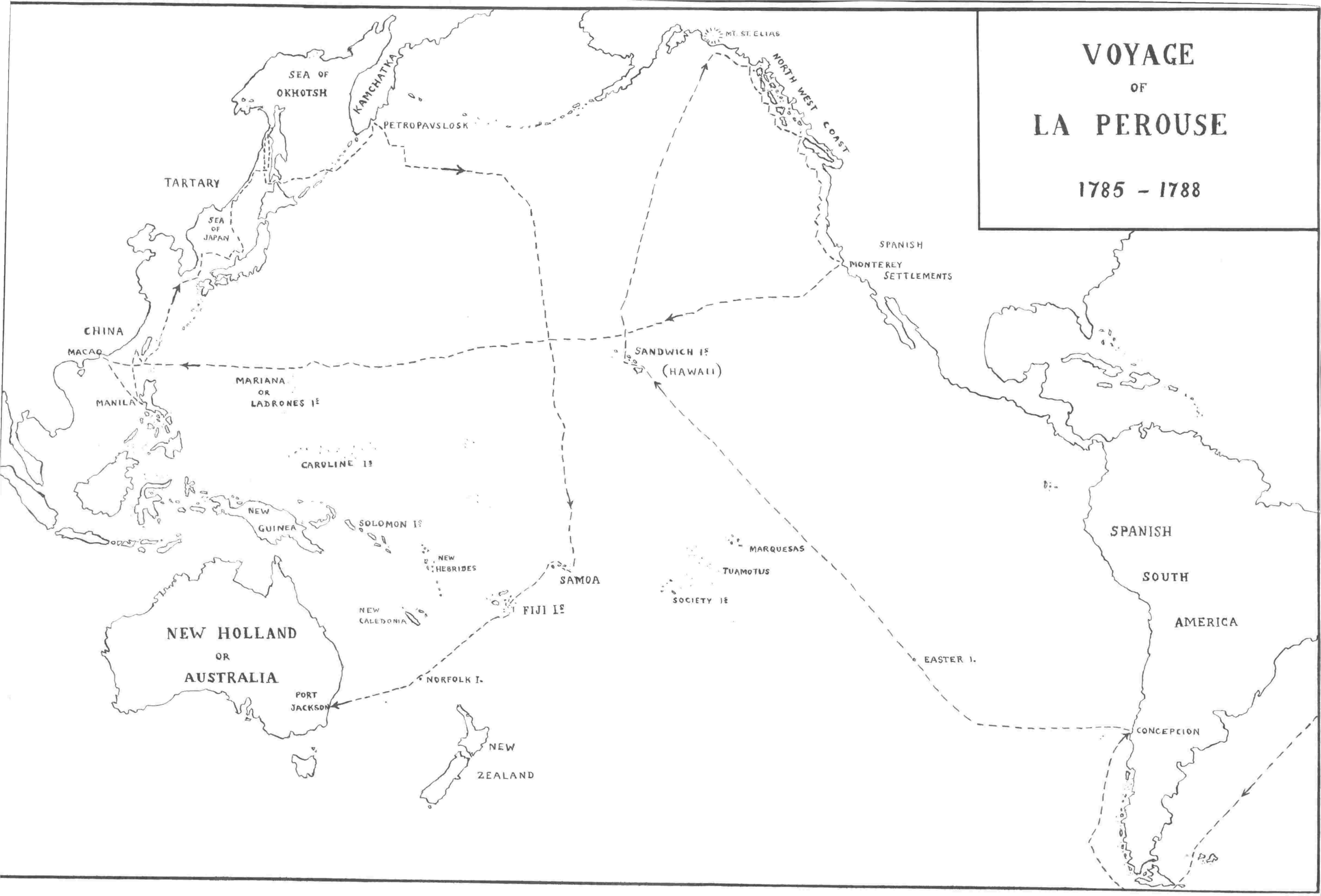
To make certain of its insubstantiality, they sailed for a time south-south-east into the empty void where it had been. The only way in which they could chart the unknown coastline with any degree of accuracy, was to sail slowly, and to wait for breaks in the almost constant fogs. They were, however, determined to lift the veil of mystery which covered the Tartary coast, for this was the only area Cook had never seen.

'We were boiling with impatience to go and explore this land of which our imagination had been full since our departure from France. It was the only part of the globe which had escaped the attention of the indefatigable Captain Cook.' (1)

On 28 June the two ships anchored in a bay which they named Baie de Ternay, where present-day Ternei stands, in 45° 13' North and 137° 29' East. The men had hopes of shooting bears, but only those who went fishing met with any success; nor were they any more fortunate in meeting the inhabitants, although they found plenty of evidence of the elusive natives who peopled the coast.

On 4 July, they anchored a little further north in a bay named this time after the Bailli de Suffren; a nearby cape still bears the name of Suffren to-day on most maps of the region. But still they met no natives. They therefore sailed across the Gulf of Tartary to Sakhalin Island, where, in a bay to which they gave the name of de Langle, they finally made contact with the natives. De Langle's name has not been retained here, the district being now called Tomari. (2) To La Pérouse's relief, these natives were neither thieves nor sullen, but friendly and obliging. An old man stepped forward and drew for them on the sand a map of the Tartary coast and of Sakhalin, pointing out that they could enter the Sea of Okhotsk either by proceeding up the Gulf to the northern narrows, or by rounding the south cape of the island. The natives, who told them of trade on the banks of the Amur river, assured them that the depth of the northernmost stretch of the straits would be sufficient for the two vessels. (3) In so doing they naturally underestimated the

(1) Ibid., vol. III, p. 14.
(2) The position of de Langle Bay was given by the French as being 47°48'36" North and 142° 17'54" East. The port of Tomari is in 47° 47' North and 142° 05' East.
(3) Ibid., vol. III, p. 37.


VOYAGE
OF
LA PEROUSE
1785 - 1788
SEA OF
OKHOTSH
KAMCHATKA
PETROPAVSLOSK
MT. ST. ELIAS
NORTH WEST COAST
TARTARY
SEA OF JAPAN
SPANISH
MONTEREY
SETTLEMENTS
CHINA
MACAO
MANILA
MARIANA
OR
LADRONES Is
SANDWICH Is
(HAWAII)
CAROLINE Is
NEW
GUINEA
SOLOMON Is
NEW
HEBRIDES
SAMOA
MARQUESAS
TUAMOTUS
SOCIETY Is
FIJI Is
NEW
CALEDONIA
NEW HOLLAND
OR
AUSTRALIA
NORFOLK I.
PORT
JACKSON
EASTER I.
SPANISH
SOUTH
AMERICA
CONCEPCION
NEW
ZEALAND

draught of the heavy French ships, for when La Pérouse continued northwards to chart the coast in the face of constant fogs, he became increasingly concerned at the shallowness of the narrows.

Boutin and Vaujuas each led a boat to sound ahead of the ships, the latter reaching furthest north, on the Tartary coast, just south of the estuary of the Amur river, but La Pérouse was not prepared to risk losing his expedition in this cold and desolate region. Not without difficulty, the ships were turned round.

'There was such a heavy sea that we took four hours to raise our anchors; the messenger of the capstan, the messenger chain both snapped, the capstan was broken: three men were seriously wounded by this accident.' (1)

The heavy seas robbed La Pérouse of an important discovery, for the navigability of the Straits remained in doubt and was not established until 1849 by the Russian Nevelskoi. La Pérouse is credited with the belief that Sakhalin was a peninsula, (2) but his conviction that there was a through channel cannot be doubted and is clearly illustrated by the charts published in Milet-Mureau's account of the voyage. Vaujuas found only six fathoms at the shallowest part - he had failed to find the true channel - and La Pérouse, uncertain of the length of the narrows and concerned at the heavy seas, considered it too dangerous to attempt a more thorough investigation with the season already well advanced. Later, he discussed this point with the natives and came to the conclusion that the narrows could be negotiated at high tide by canoes, though not by ships. (3)

It was July 28 when the expedition turned back in foggy and cold weather. Later on the same day, the fog cleared and 'we found ourselves off the coast of Tartary, at the opening of a bay which seemed very deep and which offered a safe and convenient anchorage. We had no wood and our supplies of water were very low. I decided to call there.' (4)

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(1) Ibid., vol. III, p. 55.
(2) See, for instance, Encyclopaedia Britannica, article 'Sakhalin',
(3) Milet-Mureau, Op. cit., vol. III, p. 73.
(4) Ibid., vol. III, p. 55.

This was called Baie de Castries; the name has remained, somewhat Russianised, as De Kastri. It was approximately 30 miles south of Vaujuas Point.

La Pérouse, anticipating a slow and hard struggle against the southerly winds, left this anchorage on August 2. To his surprise, the southerlies soon swung round in his favour and he made excellent progress towards the southern tip of Sakhalin where, so the natives had told him, he would be able to find a pass to the open sea. Two more names, also Russianised, have remained from this part of the voyage: Ile Monneron, a small island off the coast of southern Sakhalin, as Os Moneron, and Cap Crillonk, the south-western headland of Sakhalin, as Mys Krilon. The strait that led him out ten days later remains, to this day, La Pérouse Strait.

Once in the Sea of Okhotsk, he made for the Kuriles chain that was to take him to the Kamchatkan peninsula. In 1643, the Dutchman Martin de Vries, on the Kastricum, had sailed through the southern part of the Kuriles; La Pérouse identified the island he had named Staten Land, to the north east of Hokkaido. It was now necessary to pass through the chain to the eastward of it and, to do this, he sailed between Urup and Simushir Islands through what is now known as Boussole Strait. 'I believe this channel to be the finest of all those that can be found between the Kuriles.' (1) It was the kind of praise that reflects a sailor's relief at nearing a long hoped-for port of call. It was 30 August 1787. On September 6, the expedition anchored at Petropavlovsk or Avatscha, the main - indeed, the only - eastern town of Kamchatka.

It was a welcome break after the arduous navigation of the previous six weeks. The Russians were most friendly and hospitable; the French were taken on hunting and fishing trips, while the scientists were granted every facility for collecting specimens. A great ball was

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(1) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. III, p. 97.

given in their honour, a special occasion for the inhabitants if rather strange to the visitors, who found the local dances, as performed by the ladies of Kamchatka, somewhat different from the stately minuets of Paris.

'They [the women] can be compared only with the convulsionaries of the famous tomb of St Médard. Dancers in this part of Asia use only arms and shoulders, but their legs hardly at all. Their exhaustion is such, following this exercise, that they are all dripping with perspiration and remain stretched on the ground without enough strength left to rise. The abundant exhalations which emanate from their bodies perfume the room with a smell of oil and fish to which European noses are insufficiently accustomed to appreciate.' (1)

The dancing was, however, interrupted by the arrival of a courier from the town of Okhotsk, nearly eight hundred miles away as the crow flies, with letters for the French. Among them was an official notification from Paris, appointing La Pérouse to the rank of commodore, while his second-in-command, de Clonard, was made a captain - promotions which the Russian governor celebrated by renewed feasting and salvoes from the port artillery.

Also among the letters was one from the Minister of Marine, asking La Pérouse to hasten to Australia to assess the extent of British plans in New South Wales. He therefore altered his original intention of going to Guam, and thence through Bougainville Strait in the Solomons to Queen Charlotte Sound in New Zealand. It was this order - and not the bad reputation of the New Zealanders - which caused this expedition to omit the projected call at Queen Charlotte Sound. (2)

La Pérouse decided to send Barthélemy de Lesseps, the young

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(1) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 139-40.
(2) Letter from La Pérouse to the Minister, dated Avatscha 28 September 1787, announcing this new itinerary, and cancelling his letter of the 21 September to the same in which he hadset out the proposed Guam-Solomons-New Zealand route. Quoted in ibid., vol. IV, pp.192-4.

Russian interpreter (1) and the son of the French consul-general in St Petersburg, overland to Europe with letters and the journals of the expedition. The journey was an epic one, faced as the youth was with primitive roads, the enormous distance, the hazards of climate and of a half-civilised and badly-policed empire, but he succeeded, and to him we owe the survival of many of the most important documents of the expedition. His reward was his own survival.

The two ships left Avatscha on September 30. Hopes of a return to the Kuriles to complete the examination of the group were dashed by contrary winds. Instead, they sailed to the area where the rumoured Spanish discoveries were believed to be lying. Although La Pérouse had been hopeful that these might be found, and had posted look-outs in the topmasts with a promise of a reward for the first sailor to sight land, there was nothing to see.

Land was not seen on the southward journey until 6 December when the ships arrived off Tau in the Samoa group, Bougainville's Navigators Archipelago.

After doing some trading with the islanders, the French sailed between Tau and Olosega to Tutuila where, on the 9th, they anchored, not far from Aoloau. (2)

The Samoan Islands appeared to La Pérouse under the same romantic light as Tahiti had to Bougainville. Visiting a village, he found it charming, idyllic and peaceful.

'These natives, we kept on saying, are, without doubt, the happiest in the world; surrounded by their wives and children, they spend their days in innocence and peace, having no other care than to train birds and to gather, without working, the fruits that grow around them.' (3)

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(1) 1766-1834. He was the uncle of the canal builder.

(2) La Pérouse refers to Tutuila as Manoua, a name which may have been that of a native whom he questioned. See Fleuriot de Langle, La Tragique Expédition, p. 188, also Edition du Centenaire, p. 189, but all the names he gave to the Samoan islands are confused,; see on this infra, p.419.

(3) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. III, p. 191.

It was not, however, the abode of peace and innocence that the French imagined it to be. The natives may have appeared charming in their village, but when they came near European goods they were bold and insolent thieves. There had been a minor clash at the beginning of the stay, when a native had climbed into one of the boats and, probably in the hope of carrying away some of the goods, had started to hit a sailor who had remained on guard duty. La Pérouse, averse to the unnecessary shedding of blood and required by his instructions to observe the greatest caution, had merely had the Samoan seized by sailors and thrown into the sea. (1) He felt that it would be wise to explain to the islanders the power and range of the French rifles: he therefore bought some pigeons, had them released and then shot down. The lesson may not have been well learned, (2) for several other incidents were reported.

'I learned, however, that there had been private quarrels, but that great caution had rendered them of no account; stones had been thrown at M. Rollin, our surgeon; an islander, while pretending to admire M. de Monneron's sword, had tried to snatch it away from him and, having obtained only the scabbard, had fled, terrified at the sight of the naked blade. I noticed that, in general these islanders are very unruly and only slightly under the control of their chiefs, but I intended to leave in the afternoon, and I was congratulating myself on having attached no importance to the small vexations which we had suffered.' (3)

But de Langle was insistent on obtaining more water; he had visited a cove - now called Massacre Bay, a mile and a quarter west of Aoloau - where there was an excellent stream; La Pérouse agreed to wait until the morning. On December 11th, de Langle went with four boats to this cove, but the tide was low and still ebbing, in spite of which he persevered -

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(1) Ibid., vol. III, pp. 188-9.
(2) Some Frenchmen were of the opinion that this display did more harm than good. 'These big children, which is what these islanders are, draw the conclusion that our rifles are only good for peppering birds.' - Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 191.
(3) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 191-2.

with disastrous results.

The watching crowd of natives numbered some two hundred when he landed, but it rapidly swelled to nearly one thousand. By the time he had filled his water casks, the two leading boats were grounded and, as the French struggled to drag them back into the water, the Samoans attacked. De Langle was out of sight of the ships and unable to call for help: he was among the first to pay for his rashness. Of the sixty-one men and officers who had taken part in the work, twelve were killed and twenty wounded. Among the dead were de Langle himself, and de Lamanon, the mineralogist and meteorologist from the Boussole.

La Pérouse resisted the temptation to avenge himself on the natives, for fear of harming the innocent. (1) He sailed instead to the north coast of Upolu, saddened, but wiser about native paradises. The French were now more careful in their trading and far less lenient towards dishonesty and arrogance. The incident had affected their entire attitude towards island populations and may have had repercussions that proved harmful when, in their hour of danger, they found themselves practically at the mercy of the men of Vanikoro. In Savaii, no canoes came out to them, and they presumed that the natives there had learned of the events which had taken place on Tutuila. (2)

The massacre at Samoa has puzzled historians nearly as much as Marion du Fresne's death fourteen years earlier. There is no doubt that de Langle was rash - La Pérouse, in spite of his confidence in his second-in-command's ability, considered him obstinate and deaf to advice (3) - and that the French were over-confident, influenced as many of them were by the theory of the innate goodness of primitive man. The actual cause of the attack remains unknown; it is indeed likely that it was unpremeditated, and that the natives did not think of attacking

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(1) 'I am a thousand times more angry with the Philosophers who praise the savages than with the savages themselves.' Ibid. vol. III, p. 212.
(2) Ibid., vol. III, p. 221.
(3) Gabriel Marcel, La Pérouse, p. 202n. Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. IV, p. 241.

the Europeans until they saw them in difficulties. De Vaujuas, who escaped, claimed that the trouble began when presents of beads were made to some islanders who appeared to wield some authority over the others, in the hope that they might help to control the increasingly unruly crowd. This conciliatory action on the part of the French only served to anger those who were refused gifts. Stones began to fly and some natives in the water tried to prevent the grapnel from being raised, whereupon de Langle ordered shots to be fired into the air, a move that led to a general attack. A number of soldiers had allowed their rifles to become wet when they had disembarked, with the result that they could only watch helplessly as the Samoans attacked.

Later indications, obtained by missionaries and by Dumont d'Urville in 1836, would tend to clear the Tutuilans themselves from the responsibility of having led the attack. The real culprits might have been men from Apia, in Upolu island, who exercised a kind of overlordship on Tutuila and ~~who~~ behaved rather like gangsters in the days of the protection rackets. (1) Some substance is given to this statement by the fact that when the French ship, the Fabert, went to Tutuila in 1887 to bring home remains of the victims, the islanders declared that the bodies of the officers and men had been taken to Upolu as trophies, and that de Langle's, who was recognised as a chief and a man worthy of special respect, had been buried locally. (2)

This theory received some confirmation from La Pérouse's journal. 'The inhabitants of this island [Upolu] resembled very much those of Manoua who had betrayed us so horribly; their dress, their features, their gigantic stature differed so little that our sailors thought they could recognise several of the murderers and I had great difficulty in preventing them for firing on them.' (3)

If this is to be believed - and it may be little more than an attempt

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(1) Fleuriot de Langle, op. cit., p. 196.
(2) Ibid., p. 233. De Langle's supposed remains were duly produced and taken to France.
(3) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 218-9.

to avoid possible reprisals by placing the blame on others - then de Vaujuas' account would tally with it. The French, sharing such presents as they had among those natives whom they recognised from earlier meetings as having some influence on others, would naturally tend to ignore newcomers. Those who swelled the numbers of the onlookers so rapidly from two hundred to a thousand may well have been a party of visitors from a neighbouring island, and they would have had no background of friendly intercourse with the French to deter them from hostile acts against the white men.

The names of the islands is another source of confusion. As we have seen, La Pérouse gave Tutuila the name of Manoua because, it is believed, he misunderstood a native who had told him his own name, but as he proceeded through the archipelago the confusion worsened. It appears that he was given a list of names in Tutuila when an islander traced out the group for him, but practically none of the names correspond to the modern ones. At the same time, it is possible to reshuffle the list in such a way as to make it more intelligible.

Thus, there is an island group called Manua, (1) although it is the one which La Pérouse shows as 'Fanfoué'; the island he calls 'Opoun' is not Ofu, but the neighbouring island of Tau. The island the French named 'Pola' is modern Savaii, although the native was probably referring to the islet called Pola, off the northern coast of Tutuila. The island of Upolu was set down as 'Oyolava' which may represent Olosega, but could equally be a rendering of Aoloau, the name of the district in which the two ships were anchored. None of the six islands shown on the charts - not even tiny Apolima, set down as Calinassé - tally with the actual names of the groups, a clear warning of how dangerous it is to attempt to identify existing islands by the names given them in the journal of even a dependable explorer such as La Pérouse. (2)

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(1) G. Froment-Guyiesse, in his recent biography, understandably enough expresses the belief that La Pérouse landed at 'Manoua, today called Manua.' See his La Pérouse, pp. 101 and 109.

(2) The smaller islands of the Samoa group seen by La Pérouse are: Aunuu (left unnamed), Fanuatapu, Namua, Nuulua, Nuutele (all marked as small islets off Upolu and unnamed), and Manono (Islot Plat).

The Boussole and the Astrolabe sailed from Savaii on December 17, going south by south-east. They soon met with three islands, a circular one, Tafahi, and beyond it two more, Niuatoputapu with its off shore islet Hunganga which they recognised, the former as Schouten's Cocos, the latter Traitors Islands, These three, so they believed, were the islands which the Samoans had told them to expect and called Shika, Ossamo and Ouera. (1)

By now signs of scurvy were appearing, particularly among the servants, one of whom had died on December 10. La Pérouse made for Vavau, which he sighted two days after Christmas, but he did not intend to delay in the Friendly Islands.

'This harbour [Maurelle's in Vavau], much superior to that of Tongatapu, would have suited me extremely well for a stay of a few days ... At every moment, I was tempted to abandon the resolution I had made when leaving Manoua to call at no place until I reached Botany Bay, but reason and caution made me adhere to it.' (2)

This was the first occasion on which anyone had sailed direct from the Tonga group to Australia and La Pérouse reduced sail at night and posted look-outs for fear of striking some of the coral reefs which he suspected lay across the route. From Vavau, he sailed to Late, then south to Kao and Tofua, and west of the Ha'apai group, to Hunga Tonga and Hunga Ha'apai. Desultory trading was carried out in the Tonga group and an attempt was made to call at Norfolk Island. The scientists were anxious to visit the lonely island, but the winds were unfavourable and no anchorage was found. Weariness was becoming general and some, like Father Receveur, the chaplain of the Astrolabe, who was to die in Australia (3) of wounds received at

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(1) Ouera may have been Uvea (Wallis) Island.
(2) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. III, p. 247. Puerto del Refugio, as the *
(3) Presumably the first Frenchman to be buried on the new continent. A memorial was erected to him in Sydney in 1825 by the Baron de Bougainville.

*Spanish explorer called it, on the south coast of Vavau.

Tutuila, were willing to sacrifice research for a rest. On January 26th, they sighted Botany Bay. The British had already arrived, and Captain Phillip was in the actual process of transferring, with as much secrecy as he could manage, to Port Jackson, a few miles further north. La Pérouse could not have arrived at a less propitious time but, once the British had recognised him and accepted the peaceful nature of his intentions, they were as courteous as they could afford to be. Two British officers came on board to offer their commander's assistance - but they were careful to point out that circumstances did not enable them to offer food, munitions or sails, 'so that their offers of assistance were restricted to good wishes for the ultimate success of our voyage'. (1)

They managed without Phillip's help, but relations between them rapidly increased in warmth and cordiality. The journals of the second part of the voyage, from Kamchatka to Australia, were sent by a British ship to the United Kingdom and thence to France. The scientists made the best of a bay which had been named in appreciation of its botanical treasures and they, in turn, gave to Botany Bay some of the European seeds they had brought with them. (2) In February 1788, La Pérouse wrote to Paris of his plans for the final stage of the circumnavigation:

'I will go up to the Friendly Islands and I will carefully follow my instructions in respect of the south of New Caledonia, of Mendaña's Santa Cruz, of the south coast of de Surville's Arsacides and of Bougainville's Louisiades, to find if the latter join New Guinea or not. By the end of July 1788, I will pass between New Guinea and

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(1) Milet-Mureau, op. cit., vol. III, p. 265.
(2) It was known as 'Frenchman's Garden' for many years. See E. Scott's Lapérouse for a detailed account of the French stay in New South Wales.

New Holland by another channel than the Endeavour's, (1) if there be one. I will visit, during September and part of October, the Gulf of Carpentaria and western New Holland, as far as Van Diemen's Land, but in such a way, however, that will enable me to sail north early enough to reach the Ile de France by December 1788.' (2)

At the end of the month, the Boussole and the Astrolabe sailed out of Botany Bay. They were never seen again.

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(1) Cook's vessel.
(2) La Pérouse to the Minister of Marine, Letter of 7 February 1788 reprinted in Milet-Mureau, op, cit., vol. IV, pp. 202-3.

D'ENTRECASTEAUX AND THE SEARCH FOR LA PEROUSE.

The Boussole and the Astrolabe were due at Mauritius towards the end of 1788; until then no news could be expected from La Pérouse, unless, by some coincidence, he were to meet a British or a Dutch ship in the little-frequented waters through which he was to sail. It was not, therefore, until mid-1789 that anxiety began to be felt about the expedition, and by July the French, at the Ile de France at any rate, could no longer doubt that it had met with serious trouble. France herself was in the throes of the Revolution, the Bastille had fallen, and Louis XVI was the bewildered prisoner of public opinion. But this in no way lessened the concern of France for these lost ships.

The expedition had been no mere aristocratic whim, but a scientific voyage in keeping with the mood of the time, staffed by scientists - colleagues of the men who, by their reasoned challenging of the old order, had contributed to such a large extent to the creation of the new egalitarian world that was now dawning. It was felt - and correctly - that the savants, by their painstaking and often daring toil, had done a great deal to bring about the fall of absolutism, and to free France from centuries of slavery; the least that the grateful nation could do was to try to save the intrepid scientists who were lost

somewhere in the Pacific.

'May they return to our shores, even though they die of joy in embracing this free land!' exclaimed the staid sub-committee of the Société d'Histoire Naturelle in a patriotic burst of rhetoric.(1) The Assembly, to which this appeal was addressed, responded, as it so often did, to eloquence, and agreed that immediate steps should be taken to begin a search for the two vessels; but the actual impulse had come earlier from the Minister of Marine, Fleurieu, who had drawn up several mémoires, the main one dated 21 April 1790, setting out the possible routes to be investigated, which he had submitted to the king.(2) J.B.de LaBorde, the historian of the South Sea, suggested at much the same time an expedition for the same purpose for which 600,000 livres were to be raised by public subscription, yet, in spite of his connection with the Academy of Sciences, this failed.(3) It served, nevertheless, to increase scientific opinion in favour of a search.

When, therefore, on 22 January 1791, the Société d'Histoire Naturelle held its meeting, at which the resolution was passed asking the National Assembly to organise an expedition, the proposal was examined with celerity by the Agriculture, Commerce

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(1) M.Delattre, Rapport sur la Recherche à faire de M.de la Pérouse, fait à l'Assemblée Nationale, (Paris, 1791)
(2) Fleuriot de Langle, La Tragique Expédition, p.210.
(3) J.B.de LaBorde, Mémoire sur la Prétendue Découverte... suivi d'un projet de souscription pour un armement destiné à la recherche de M.de la Pérouse, (Paris, 1791)

and Marine Sub-Committee under the chairmanship of M. Delattre, deputy for Abbeville. The Société had asked that the king authorise the Minister of Marine to release the text of the original instructions issued to La Pérouse, so that the investigating sub-committee could study the problem and the difficulties involved. Fleurieu was far more obliging - he forwarded the text of La Pérouse's last letter from Botany Bay, in which the explorer outlined his intended route through the Santa Cruz and Solomon groups. It was the only document of any value, since La Pérouse had not followed the original instructions, but had used them merely as a guide.

The Parliamentary Sub-Committee recommended a grant of 600,000 livres for an expedition to explore the area but, in order to gain the utmost benefit out of what was basically a humanitarian and patriotic enterprise, it suggested that an additional 100,000 livres be allocated, so that scientific research could be carried out, and all the necessary equipment obtained.

The Assembly carried the recommendation on 9 February 1791,(1); Louis XVI, who still had constitutional control over the acts of the Parliamentarians, signed the required decrees on the 25th of the same month. (2) At the same time, it was agreed to publish a full account of the journey as far as Botany Bay, the

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(1) 'Décret de l'Assemblée Nationale', reprinted in Rossel, Voyage de Dentrecasteaux, Vol. I, pp.XVII-XVIII.

(2) 'Loi relative à la découverte des deux frégates françaises La Boussole et l'Astrolabe', signed by the king 25 Feb.1791, countersigned 7 April 1791. See E.Eberstad, The North West Coast, p.60.

proceeds to be donated to Madame de la Pérouse. In May 1791, Antoine-Raymond-Joseph de Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, perhaps the most experienced French captain in Far Eastern navigation, was appointed to command the expedition.

Even while these official steps were being taken, other propositions were being discussed for voyages to the Pacific in search of the lost ships. At the beginning of 1791, four merchants from Lorient - Garnier, Torkler, Piron and Dussault - asked for a permit to trade in furs in Kamchatka and to look for remains of La Pérouse.(1) They disposed of a ship of 300 tons, the Flavie, which they intended placing under the command of Captain Magon de Villaumont. They were probably more interested in the fur trade than in La Pérouse, and so, in view of the fact that the latter had no intention of returning to Kamchatka, their request stood little chance of being granted. The deputies, although not opposed to trade as such, were more likely to be moved by an appeal to the emotions. That may be why, when Aristide-Aubert Dupetit-Thouars, later in the same year, appealed for funds to finance an expedition to seek La Pérouse and restore him to the waiting arms of France, they were more favourably disposed. Dupetit-Thouars, although not averse to a little trading as a sideline, was a romantic, burning to distinguish himself in some great enterprise and willing to make real sacrifices to finance his expedition.

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(1) Bulletin de la Société de Géographie, Edition du Centenaire de la mort de la Pérouse, pp.305-6.

His proposal appeared in quite a different light from the commercial venture of Garnier and his associates; it was also, in view of Fleurieu's information, rather more realistic, because he planned to travel to New Holland and New Guinea - the area where La Pérouse was believed to have been lost - before sailing to Nootka Sound on the north-west coast of America, where he would obtain a supply of furs to cover a part or the whole of the cost of the scheme. This suggestion Dupetit-Thouars abandoned in favour of a joint expedition with d'Entrecasteaux, under the latter's general command, with no fur trading, but neither d'Entrecasteaux nor the Ministry would sanction this. (1) Dupetit-Thouars was not discouraged; he launched an appeal for funds for a voyage under his sole command; two expeditions would surely be better than one. Louis XVI headed the subscription list but, even so, money did not come in as readily as hoped, particularly as Dupetit-Thouars intended to leave as soon as possible to forestall d'Entrecasteaux. He therefore sold the greater part of his personal property, and persuaded the Assembly, by his pertinacity, his example and his eloquence, to vote him a grant of 10,000 livres (2). The sum was small, in view of the fact that d'Entrecasteaux was being financed at the rate of 300,000 livres per year, but there was no obligation, moral or otherwise, on the deputies,

(1) The extent to which trade would enter in the official expedition was the stumbling block; if Dupetit-Thouars were given his own command, it would be difficult to prevent trading operations, even though Dupetit-Thouars had announced his intention to forego that part of his original plans.

(2) 'Project de décret d'une allocation de 10,000 livres à M. Dupetit-Thouars qui arme deux navires de commerce pour la recherche de M. de la Pérouse', in the Moniteur of 24 December 1791 quoted in 'Bulletin de la Société de Géographie, Edition du Centenaire. Note the reversion to a plan involving trading vessels.

to back two separate search parties. It was, however, insufficient, and Dupetit-Thouars made another appeal. It failed because in April 1792 news came that traces had been found of the wreckage of the La Pérouse expedition in the Admiralty group.(1) To the irrepressible Dupetit-Thouars, this was less a setback than a motive for immediate action - now that he knew where the remains and possible survivors of the wreck were to be found, it was more imperative than ever to hasten to the rescue before d'Entrecasteaux himself - who, by then, had left - could reach the Admiralties.

Unable to raise any more money, Dupetit-Thouars mortgaged the future - he obtained his pay in advance for a period of two years (2). Justice would have expected fate to smile on such a determined man, but his expedition, hampered by the initial lack of capital, was doomed from the start. Even so, his failure was connected with a final show of romantic generosity well in keeping with the enterprise. The Diligent left on 22 August 1792 for Cape Verde, where Dupetit-Thouars rescued no fewer than forty marooned Portuguese sailors, but while crossing the Atlantic the ill-provisioned and over-crowded ship was struck by an epidemic, so that by the time they reached Fernando de Noronha off the coast of Brazil, nearly a third of the crew had died, and all were in a bad

(1) 'Annonce du naufrage de la Pérouse aux Iles de l'Amirauté et rejet d'une nouvelle demande de fonds en faveur de M. Dupetit-Thouars', in 'Moniteur' of 10 April 1792. Ibid.
(2) 'Décret accordant à M. Dupetit-Thouars une somme équivalent à deux années de ses appointements', in 'Moniteur' of 29 May 1792, Ibid.

state. The French were furthermore suspect, war had broken out in Europe and the Revolution made it difficult for foreign officials in isolated outposts to judge of the validity of French documents. The governor of the island flatly refused to believe Dupetit-Thouars's claims, and seized the ship, which was sent to Pernambuco and eventually, with its crew, to Lisbon. Events had finally caught up with the captain, whose plans collapsed about him as a new regime arose in France, which in time was to threaten all Europe. Finally freed in 1796, he returned to France to serve under Napoleon and to die at the battle of Aboukir,(1) leaving to another member of his family, Abel Aubert Dupetit-Thouars, the honour of sailing into the Pacific to carry the French flag over its turbulent waters.(2) It was thus left to d'Entrecasteaux alone to organise the search for La Pérouse.

D'Entrecasteaux belonged to the professional middle classes, his father having been president of the provincial parliament of Provence; socially, he was thus at least the equal of Bougainville and of La Pérouse. He had entered the navy as a 'garde de la marine' in 1754 at the age of seventeen, serving under his relative the bailli de Suffren St. Tropez, who was later to gain fame by his exploits in the Indian Ocean. Two years later, d'Entrecasteaux was promoted to the rank of ensign,

(1) Hulot, D'Entrecasteaux 1737-93, pp. 82-3n. An account of Dupetit-Thouars' abortive expedition was given in Une Expédition oubliée à la recherche de la Pérouse, by Gabriel Marcel, in 1885.

(2) He carried out the negotiations which led to the French annexation of Tahiti.

following his bravery at the battle of Minorca where the French defeated the luckless Admiral Byng. His first command came in 1769 when he was put in charge of a small boat, appropriately called the Espion, patrolling the coastal waters of Corsica, where troubles had arisen following the cession of that island to France.

A lieutenant in 1770, he was made a knight of St Louis in 1775 and, four years later, became commander of the Majestueux, a ship of 110 guns. Soon after, he was appointed assistant-director of ports and arsenals, under the great Fleurieu himself. It was then, at the onset of a brilliant career, that a family scandal - a murder committed by one of his nephews - forced him to leave France, although, by appointing him to command the Indian Naval Station, the French government did not lose his services. It was, in fact, this appointment which gave him the opportunity of gaining wide experience in matters of Far Eastern navigation, and of proving himself, by his daring, originality of mind and organisational ability, the only choice for the voyage in search of la Pérouse.

The French trade at Canton had fallen on bad days, as La Pérouse had discovered when he called there in 1787. 'The two agents of the French India Company in China are insane. M. Thérieu has shot himself and M. Dumoulin has committed certain acts which in France would have caused him to be put under restraint.'(1) Under such circumstances, French traders

(1) La Pérouse to the Minister of Marine, dated Macao 2 Feb. 1787, quoted in Milet-Mureau, Voyage de la Pérouse vol. IV., p. 183.

had found it difficult to enforce payments of debts due to them by Chinese merchants. It was d'Entrecasteaux's task to obtain satisfaction by showing the flag in Canton, and he decided to do this by sailing by the Dutch East Indies with two ships, the Résolution and the Subtile. This route, in January, involved constant battling against the prevailing monsoon winds - a near impossible feat which d'Entrecasteaux carried out without loss, and one which considerably enhanced French prestige among the Chinese. He had arrived a few days after La Pérouse himself had left for Manila but, as we have seen, he was able to send him some help. He was subsequently appointed governor of the Ile de France, a post which he filled until 1789, when he returned again to France. He was then given the command of the Patriote. In 1791, following his appointment as head of the expedition, and to mark the importance of his mission, he was raised to the rank of rear-admiral, being thus the first Frenchman of this rank to enter the Pacific.(1)

Seldom, however, have explorers been sent under less propitious circumstances. The Revolution had turned the entire social pyramid upside down and, in the upset, naval discipline had become one of the earliest casualties. 'During the latter half of 1789, disturbances occurred in all the seaport towns; in Le Havre, in Cherbourg, in Brest, in Rochefort, in Toulon...

(1) He was promoted vice-admiral in July 1792, but died before the news of this promotion could reach him.- Hulot, D'Entrecasteaux 1737-1793., p.136.

In the fleets, insubordination soon developed into anarchy.' (1) Bougainville and d'Entrecasteaux, both senior officers with middle-class connections, who were in sympathy with the original aims of the Revolution, were rapidly disheartened by the lack of discipline. The aristocratic officers were either in prison or relieved of their commands or else had fled abroard as émigrés. The remaining captains were compelled to negotiate with committees set up by the sailors, who intended to apply democratic principles to the administration of the navy and, eventually, to naval operations. These officers were in frequent danger of being denounced as anti-revolutionaries and royalists, and under constant surveillance by official, and also by self-appointed, agents of the central government. By the time d'Entrecasteaux left, in September 1791, some semblance of order had been restored after the early egalitarian experiments and, to some extent, an uneasy truce prevailed, while the various revolutionary groups, jockeyed for power and the Revolution proceeded on its uneven way towards the Terror. Even so, his two ships, as they left the stricken shores, carried the seeds of revolt within them.

Added to this was the problem of discovering remains of La Perouse's vessels somewhere among the myriads of islands in the South West Pacific. The report of a wreck in the Admiralty Islands had not reached France before d'Entrecasteaux's

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(1) A.T.Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire 1793-1812, vol.I, pp.41 et seq.

departure. All he could aim at, therefore, was to follow the track that the explorer had indicated in his last letter from Botany Bay. LaBorde, with delightful vagueness, had expressed the belief that La Pérouse might be found 'in New Zealand, in New Britain, in New Ireland or in the Arsacides or, perhaps, on some faraway island.'(1) Unhelpful though this was, it summed up the current knowledge of the day.

The wonder is that, with anarchy knocking at the gates, France had yet managed to maintain her determination to send explorers into the Pacific. Fleurieu, soon to be imprisoned under the Terror, had made preparations as careful as if the times were normal. The instructions, (2) which he drew up in his capacity as Minister of Marine and of the Colonies, and over which he no doubt consulted Louis XVI, required d'Entrecasteaux to sail to the Cape, then to the islands of St Paul and Amsterdam, in the Southern Indian Ocean; he was then to proceed to Cape Leeuwin, in Western Australia, verify St Allouarn's work and comment on d'Après de Mannevillette's charts; the lack of accurate knowledge about the Australian coastline, an area so far neglected by French navigators, was to be made up, and to begin with, d'Entrecasteaux was to survey Peter Nuyts Land, 'as if he were discovering it for the first time.'(3) Sailing to Tasmania, he was to go on to the Friendly Islands, to New Caledonia, then follow La Pérouse's proposed route to the

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(1) Mémoire sur la Prétendue Découverte... p.12

(2) 'Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'instructions particulières au Sieur Dentrecasteaux, chef de division des Armées navales, commandant les frégates, La Recherche et L'Espérance, Rossel, Voyage, vol. I. pp. XIX - XI -IV.

(3) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. xxvii.

New Hebrides, the Solomons, the Louisiades, the north-east coast of New Guinea, and return by way of the Gulf of Carpentaria, and the west coasts of Australia to Cape Leeuwin. He was given full authority to depart from these instructions if circumstances made it necessary, and to call at Batavia for supplies, if needed; the only condition which the government laid down was that the voyage should not exceed three years. For all other matters, he was to refer to the instructions given to La Pérouse, which were repeated for d'Entrecasteaux's guidance.(1)

'Frigates' was a high-sounding title to describe the ships allocated for the campaign, for they were really 'gabares' - heavy three-masted store ships - of 500 tons, formerly called the Truite and the Durance,(2) but renamed more suitably the Recherche and Espérance. 'These two ships were perhaps the worst ones that one could use in a campaign of this kind: they were very bad sailers, manoeuvred with difficulty, had a considerable draught, and were simply sheathed in wood and nailed, instead of being copper-bottomed'.(3) The Recherche had a complement of 113 officers, 'savants' and men, and was commanded by d'Entrecasteaux, with d'Auribau as his second-in-command. The Espérance, a slow and cumbersome vessel, had a complement of 106, and was commanded by Huon de Kermadec, who

(1) Ibid., p. xliii. Rossel did not, however, reprint them, since they had already been published by Milet-Mureau in his account of La Pérouse's voyage.
(2) Jurien de la Gravière in Souvenirs d'un Amiral, states that they were previously called the Abondance and the Gros Ventre, see vol. I, p. 82.
(3) P. Levot, in Nouvelle Biographie Générale, vol. 16, article 'Entrecasteaux'. This method, however, was not altogether unsatisfactory. Copper bottoming had its own disadvantages, especially on long journeys in little-frequented waters.

had sailed with d'Entrecasteaux to China in the Résolution.

Third-in-command in the Recherche was de Rossel (1) who had also served under d'Entrecasteaux before, and who had enjoyed his protection since 1785. It was he who was to compile the official account of the expedition in 1808, using d'Entrecasteaux's and his own journals; de Rossel was to go on to a distinguished career, succeeding Fleurieu at the Bureau of Longitudes in 1811, and Bougainville at the Institut in the following year; in 1814 he was appointed assistant to de Rosily, who was director-general of the Dépot des Cartes et Plans de la Marine, and succeeded him in 1826; he was a founder of the Société de Géographie and its first President; he reached the rank of rear-admiral in 1822. It was he who, with de Rosily, drew up the instructions issued to the early-nineteenth-century navigators, namely Freycinet, Duperrey, and Dumont d'Urville. Another man in the Recherche who had also sailed with d'Entrecasteaux on a previous occasion was Jean Baptiste Willaumez; only two years older than de Rossel, he became rear-admiral in 1804, at a time when de Rossel had only just returned from his exile in England. In 1819, Louis XVIII promoted him to the rank of vice-admiral; he was then occupied in compiling his Dictionaire de la Marine, which became a standard work. The son of a gunner, he had served before the mast under the Old Regime, and received advancement under each one of the succeeding governments. He died under Louis-Philippe, who had made him a count.

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(1) Elizabeth Paul Edouard, Chevalier de Rossel, 1765-1829.

The scientists who joined the expedition were no less able. Among them, the most prominent was Charles François Beautemps-Beaupré, a 25-year-old hydrographer, whose carefully drawn charts are contributions of the utmost value to the knowledge of the Pacific and of southern Tasmania. In the course of a long life, he was to work on surveys of the coasts of northern France, of the Adriatic, of Holland, and of the Elbe; his magnum opus is the Nouveau Pilote Français, a work which took him twenty-two years, and which constitutes a complete hydrography of the Atlantic and Channel coastlines of France.

Another, Jacques Julien de La Billardière, a 35-year-old botanist and doctor, had gone to England to examine the botanical collections of Sir Joseph Banks, with whom he was to remain on very friendly terms, even during the bitter years of the Revolutionary War. Of an independent turn of mind, he was quick to take offence and to suspect the motives of others; he consequently resented shipboard discipline, and disliked, in particular, such offshoots of the ancient nobility as d'Auribeau and de Rossel, for, like most 'savants', he was a republican. D'Auribeau and La Billardière represent the two, quite irreconcilable, points of view responsible for the turbulence that marked the later stages of the expedition. La Billardière wrote his own account of the voyage(1), a work which appeared

(1) Relation du Voyage à la Recherche de la Pérouse, par le citoyen Labillardière, Paris (1801).

seven years before de Rossel's, and which presents the pro-revolutionary point of view. Claude Riche, another doctor and botanist, was to be involved in the dissensions in which La Billardière engaged his own partisan energies, but from which Riche, a mild and sickly man, continually suffered. His collections were impounded by the Dutch in Java, and he himself died soon after his return to France in 1797.

A number of youths of promise were also taken on board in accordance with the usual practice; of these, Jurien de la Gravière included an account of the voyage when, as a retired admiral, he wrote his autobiography.(1) Even these youths were on the border line between the old regime and the new. The reform of the navy carried out in 1786, when the basic class structure of the service was altered, had provided for two sources of officer recruits - the élèves, wholly noble youths who were required to furnish evidence of their nobility before being admitted, and the volontaires, from a wider, but still restricted circle, who were the sons of what may loosely be called the petite noblesse and the haute bourgeoisie, sons of minor noblemen, of serving officers, of merchants engaged in the wholesale trade, of ship-owners and of other people with evidence of wealth and standing. The volontaires could still only obtain promotion beyond the rank of sub-lieutenant if they

(1) With this difference - that he gave fictitious names to all who took part in the expedition. Thus, D'Entrecasteaux becomes 'de Brétigny', Kermadec 'de Terrasson', d'Auribeau 'de Mauvoisis', and Rossel 'de Vernon'.

displayed exceptional skill. The young men who accompanied d'Entrecasteaux belonged to one or other of these divisions: thus Jurien was a volontaire, while de Boynes, related to the former Minister of the Navy, was an élève. This, in the ferment of the Revolution, would have been enough to strain the relations between them, but, a few months before their departure, the two ranks had been abolished by decree, and a new, egalitarian system of entry had been adopted instead. There were to be aspirants, youths aged between fifteen and twenty who were learning their trade, and enseignes, the usual minor rank in the officer class; but with the difference that these were now interchangeable with officers in the merchant service: after 1791, an officer of plebeian descent in the merchant service became an ensign in the naval reserve, and obtained the opportunity of rising to any rank in what had formerly been a preserve of the upper classes. This, while providing the navy with a much-needed volunteer reserve of trained and experienced men, put an end to the class barrier that had plagued the Old Regime. Merit had, at last, become the basis of promotion in a service which had once sent youths in their early twenties on dangerous missions. (1) D'Entrecasteaux left while these reforms were being put into effect, and it is obvious that the young men who sailed with him under the old order were fully aware of the changes - some of them being conscious that their privileges were being swept away, others impatient that these still remained in the two ships.

(1) See in this connection A. T. Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, vol. I, pp. 50-3.

Thus was the commander plagued with difficulties - the uncertainty which surrounded La Pérouse's final itinerary, the poor quality of the ships allocated to him, the unsettled conditions within the naval service itself. If his character has been correctly assessed - 'a fearless sailor, a wise diplomat, a careful administrator, a liberal mind, straight of character, if slightly inclined towards melancholy',(1) - an estimate which no one has challenged, - then here was the man to bring his ships home safely.

Having sailed on 29 September 1791, from Brest, the two ships were making for Tenerife, their first port of call. The sea was rough, and the scientists, in particular, were suffering from sea-sickness. D'Entrecasteaux then opened sealed orders which promoted him to the rank of rear-admiral. The same promotion list raised Huon de Kermadec to the rank of 'capitaine de vaisseau', while d'Auribeau received the cross of St Louis. Tenerife was sighted on 12 October, the ships anchored there on the following day and until the 23rd when they left. The naturalists went on their expeditions while supplies were being laid in. Of particular value were the citrus fruits which were obtained there, for the passage from the Canary Islands to the Cape was marked by contrary winds, and a consequent threat to the water supplies.

'The lemons, which we had obtained at Tenerife, were of great use during the crossing. A lemonade was made with them, a ration of which was given from time to time to each person,

(1) Hulot, D'Entrecasteaux 1737-1793, pp. 137-9.

and this beverage proved itself a great help in our circumstances. The contrary winds that we had to face compelled us to reduce the consumption of water; the fear of a shortage before we reached the cape, and of being unable to get there without some call on the coast of Brazil, made us bear this privation with patience. Furthermore, the général (1) himself showed us the example, by being the first to cut down his consumption. One cannot, except by experience, realise how painful it is to spend a part of the day under the burning rays of the sun, reduced to three quarters of a bottle of water (sometimes bad) for a period of 24 hours.' (2)

However, on 16 January 1792, twelve and a half weeks after leaving Tenerife, the expedition sighted Table Mountain, and the following day the two ships anchored in the bay. It was here that d'Entrecasteaux received a message that caused him to alter his plans. 'A boat, which came alongside even before we had anchored, informed us that a French frigate, sent from the Ile de France, had called at this bay, and had left a few days ago, having left messages for us concerning M. de la Pérouse who was believed to have been shipwrecked east of Timor, according to the report given by the captain of a ship which had sailed in that area, and which claimed to have seen some men, wearing European clothes and French naval uniforms.' (3) The captain in

(1) Général in the French navy refers to a flag officer.
(2) Fragments de Journal Anonyme sur la Recherche, S.Hy.M., Cn 105-5., p.342-3.
(3) Ibid., pp.343-4.

question was a Captain Hunter who, returning to England, had been shipwrecked on Norfolk Island, and had taken a small Dutch vessel bound for Batavia. Passing through St George's Channel, he had come to the Admiralty Islands, and, in the eastermost island, had seen natives wearing European uniforms. In Batavia, Hunter had told two French captains of this, and they in turn had informed M. de St Félix, commander of the French Indian naval station. De St Félix had therefore considered it desirable that d'Entrecasteaux should be advised at once.(1) To his letter, he joined two affidavits signed by the two French captains who had met Hunter in Java - one, Magon de l'Epinay, stated that the islanders had red and blue uniforms and some had made signs like a man shaving; the other, Préaudet, claimed that Hunter could even make out the uniforms to be French. They furthermore added that Hunter had been told by La Pérouse at Botany Bay that he intended to sail through St George's Channel.

There was no clear reason why La Pérouse should have decided to deviate from his original plan and make for the north of New Guinea, instead of for the Gulf of Carpentaria; it certainly seemed unlikely that he would have told Hunter of his intentions at practically the same time as he was writing to his superiors in Paris, informing them that he was preparing to explore northern and western Australia. It could be, of course, that the letter containing this last change of plan had failed to

(1) Labillardière, who also reports this incident, refers tersely to de St Félix, who was a marquis, as 'the 'citoyen St Félix'.

reach Paris, but d'Entrecasteaux suspected that the language difficulty had caused Hunter's listeners to misunderstand him. In addition to this, Hunter himself, on his way home, was actually in Capetown when the French expedition arrived - but he made no attempt to communicate with the French, and left the port within a few hours.

D'Entrecasteaux questioned Hunter's friends who declared that the British captain had not mentioned anything to them about his strange discovery - nor indeed did Hunter say anything later. Suspicious of the reliability of St Félix's report, d'Entrecasteaux was nevertheless unwilling to treat too lightly the information which the commander had taken so much trouble to send him. (1) He accordingly decided to make for the Admiralty group by way of the Moluccas, and hoped to reach Sunda Straits by the end of March before the southeast monsoon made further progress impossible.

Bertrand, the astronomer, who had sustained a fall while climbing Table Mountain, Blavier, the naturalist, and Ely, the artist who was ill, were left behind at Capetown (2); Bertrand was to die soon after. But, among the stowaways who were found after the ships sailed, one man - a German who had escaped from a ship transporting him to Botany Bay - was to prove himself invaluable on account of his skill as a watchmaker.

(1) The report of Hunter's supposed find was received in France early in 1792, and was published in the Moniteur on 10 April. It was this which led to the rejection of Dupetit-Thouars's last appeal for funds.

(2) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, pp. 33-4.

Though d'Entrecasteaux may have had some doubts about the possibility of reaching New Guinea before the monsoons, he remembered his epic voyage to China, and thus had proof that it was possible, although difficult. Luck was needed on both occasions. But on 6 March, twenty days after sailing from the Cape, he was still only in 35°S and 46°20E, battling against the winds in heavy seas. The vessels themselves had proved to be disappointing: they were slow, especially the Espérance, and their keels having been unevenly nailed, they became covered with weeds and barnacles even sooner than usually. 'The Espérance resembled those tree-trunks which have been afloat a long time on the ocean, and around which gather, never to leave them, a multitude of fish, where the greater devour the lesser, and where the latter in turn feed on families of an inferior genus.'(1)

After an exchange of views with Kermadec, d'Entrecasteaux decided that it was getting far too late to attempt the voyage to the Admiralty Islands via the Dutch East Indies; the food was bad, and to those unused to long sea voyages, the discomforts were growing. 'The maggots were leaving the biscuits to spread into all our food; they jumped and wriggled, like those that live ordinarily in cheese. A long time elapsed before the repugnance they caused us weakened...' (2)

It seemed as though Fate had intended d'Entrecasteaux to alter course, for hardly had he ordered course to be set for the

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(1) J.de la Gravière, Souvenirs d'un Amiral, vol.I, p.97.
(2) La Billardière, Relation du Voyage, p.114.

south-east, in order to seek the islands of St Paul and Amsterdam, than the strong winds which had been blowing constantly from the north-east died down and were replaced by a favourable westerly breeze.(1) This was on 6 March; and on 28 March, Amsterdam was sighted.

Some confusion remains over the name of the island seen on this day: in some accounts - notably La Billardière's (2) and the Fragments de Journal anonyme sur la Recherche (3) - it is called St Paul. D'Entrecasteaux explains the discrepancy: 'It should be pointed out, to avoid all misunderstanding, that Captain Vlaming (sic) gives the name of St Paul to the southernmost island, and that of Amsterdam to the other; on the general map of Cook's last voyage, on the contrary, St Paul is the northernmost island: we have not followed the latter.' (4) The weather was fairly overcast, and the uninhabited island appeared to be on fire. (5) Speculating on the possible cause of the conflagration, the French sailed on towards Tasmania. The plan was to anchor in Adventure Bay, but as they approached the coast a great deal of confusion was reigning on board. D'Entrecasteaux

(1) Rossel, Voyage., vol. I, p. 38.
(2) La Billardière, Relation, vol. I, p. 110.
(3) P. 346.
(4) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I., p. 44.
(5) The possibility of this fire having been caused by man, though remote, cannot be excluded. Captain Péron states that the ship he was on, in August 1792, only a few months later, sent a boat to go to the coast 'to visit a house we had signalled... The house and the rest of the island seemed uninhabited.' Sealers were sometimes left on these islands to gather skins; he himself spent forty months on St Paul (which he calls Amsterdam) See Mémoires du Capitaine Péron sur ses Voyages, vol. I, p. 175.

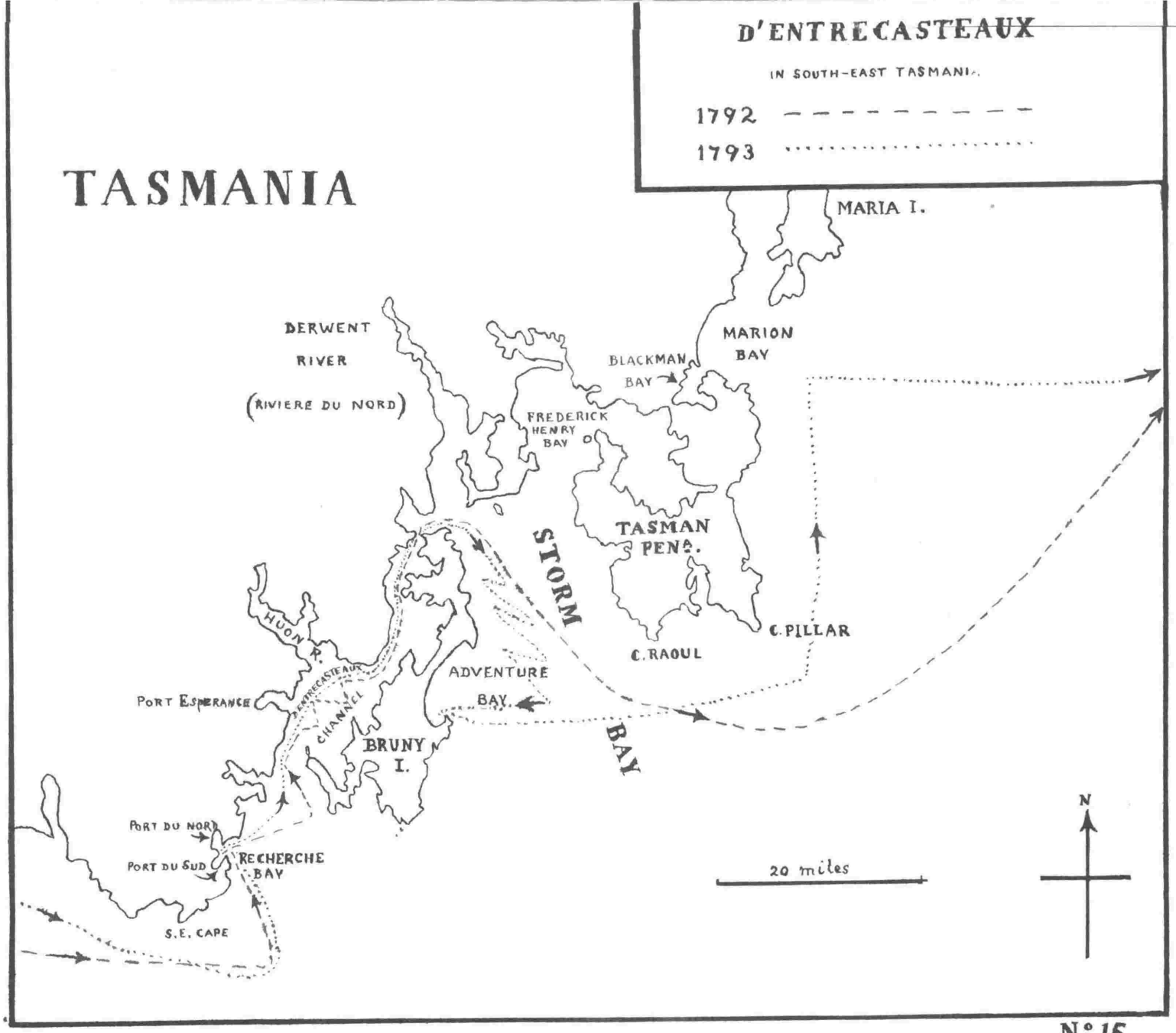
had been hurt when a sudden movement of the ship in heavy seas had thrown him, and he remained in his cabin plotting the course from information brought to him by the officers. Willaumez, according to La Billardière, had given the bearing of Eddystone Rock as bearing S by 19°W, whereas it was S by 19°E(1); D'Entrecasteaux ordered him to make for the bay which lay to the north and ~~which~~, had the information been correct, would have been Adventure Bay. The Recherche thus entered into an uncharted bay, to which the French gave the name of their ship. It was 21 April 1792.

They sent boats to sound the bay, and to explore its further shores; to their surprise they appeared to have entered not an enclosed harbour, but a continuous channel - a conclusion which was confirmed on 16 May, when the two ships started to sail north through the channel which they named after the commander, while the island thus separated from the mainland was called Bruni Island. 'From all sides one could see bays of an immense depth, all equally sheltered against the winds... None of the navigators in the expedition had yet seen in his travels such a vast and such a safe anchorage; all the world's fleets could be gathered there and still they would leave vast spaces unfilled.' (2)

It was an important discovery - the south-east coast of Tasmania was revealing the deep harbour and the river on which Hobart has since been built, and the relatively simple bays

(1) La Billardière, Relation, vol. I, p. 117n. J.B. Walker in Early Tasmania, attributes the blame to Raoul, but gives no source for this statement; he may have confused the work of a 'pilote' such as Raoul, who did not set a course, but merely saw that the required course was being followed, with that of an ordinary pilot.

(2) Rossel Voyage, p. 80.


D'ENTRECASTEAUX
IN SOUTH-EAST TASMANIA.
1792
1793
TASMANIA
MARIA I.
MARION BAY
BLACKMAN BAY
DERWENT RIVER
(RIVIERE DU NORD)
FREDERICK HENRY BAY
TASMAN PEN^A.
STORM BAY
C. PILLAR
C. RAOUL
HUON R.
D'ENTRECASTEAUX CHANNEL
PORT ESPERANCE
ADVENTURE BAY
BRUNY I.
PORT DU NORD
PORT DU SUD
RECHERCHE BAY
S.E. CAPE
20 miles
N

N° 15

charted by Tasman and Cook flowered into an intricate pattern of coves and indentations. It was d'Entrecasteaux's exploration in 1792 and 1793 that focused attention on the Derwent River area as a suitable place for a settlement.

Meanwhile the French rowed and sounded along the channel, and explored the edge of the silent forest. Beautemps-Beaupré worked on his delicate and exact charts, while the naturalists excitedly brought back the treasures of the beaches. D'Entrecasteaux, whose account is from the literary point of view, far above the work of any Pacific explorer before him - excepting only Bougainville - was greatly impressed by the scene that opened out in front of the two ships:

'I would attempt in vain to express the sensation I felt at the sight of this solitary harbour, situated at the ends of the world, and so perfectly enclosed that one can consider oneself separated from the rest of the universe. Everything reflects the wild state of savage nature. One finds, at every step, side by side with the beauties of Nature abandoned to herself, signs of her decrepitude, trees of a great height and of a proportionate diameter, with no branches along the trunks but crowned by an evergreen foliage; some, that seem as old as the world itself, intertwined and crowded to impenetrability, serve as supports for other trees of similar dimensions which, crumbling with age, fertilise the earth with their rotting remains... This haven, one of the most convenient and safest, which contrasts so remarkably with the name borne by the bay near which it is concealed [Storm Bay] is an oval-shaped basin,

seven hundred toises across its greatest width; it is protected on all sides by exceedingly thick woods which rise in an amphitheatre; its waters are so calm that the strongest winds hardly ruffle its surface.' (1)

The Frenchmen were most curious to meet the natives, whose behaviour had so puzzled Marion Dufresne some twenty years before. Some were seen, but they fled at once into the dense bush; traces of their passage had been found, as had a simple settlement of a dozen huts 'built with very little intelligence',(2) but no contact was made until the end of May, when a few gifts were made to them just before the expedition left Tasmania. These efforts however, were not in vain, for the explorers' friendliness paid dividends when they returned to d'Entrecasteaux Channel in the following year.

From the scientific point of view, the stay had been valuable. Plants and molluscs were gathered in large quantities, as were rock samples, though unfortunately not without some friction. The sailors, who of course outnumbered the 'savants', appreciated the molluscs for their edibility, and made heavy inroads on the supplies available along the nearest shores; in an attempt to preserve the peace, d'Entrecasteaux ordered that the catches be submitted to the scientists before being handed

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(1) Rossel, Voyage, pp.54-6. Rossel must also be given some credit for the literary style of the book.
(2) Ibid., p.55.

to the cooks or, as was usual with cockles, swallowed on the spot. The sailors, after weeks of wormy biscuits, resented this regulation, which was largely ignored. It was fortunate, perhaps, that the lonely Tasmanian shores provided enough for both the hungry and the curious, but this in turn bred more troubles - the jars in which the molluscs were left to perish overflowed from the collectors' cabins into the 'Grande Chambre' and filled the air with their varied odours; they had to be banished to the odd corners of the ships. 'The shellfish, hunted from their retreats, could no longer rot in peace.'

There was no sign of any wreckage, and none was expected, for La Pérouse had not indicated any intention of sailing to Tasmania. Many years later, however, there spread a rumour about supposed documents, relating to La Pérouse, being found in Adventure Bay;(1) a report of this was given in the Tasmanian Almanack for 1827 - an interesting date, for it was at that time that Dillon, the man who was to solve finally the mystery of La Pérouse's death was in Tasmania, on his way to the scene of the shipwreck, but meanwhile entangled in disputes with the Tasmanian authorities.

According to the Tasmanian Almanack, 'M. de la Pérouse took a friendly leave of the British, and set sail from Botany Bay on the 11 March, and was never more heard of till the year 1809, when the ship Venus, Captain Bunker, from Calcutta, put into Adventure Bay to refresh. On the shore, he discovered the stump

(1) See J.B. Walker, Early Tasmania, pp. 7n and 24n.

of a tree, which had some French words cut on it, very much obliterated; he however decyphered sufficient to induce him to believe that it was, at first, 'Dig Underneath'; and accordingly he did so, and there he found a bottle sealed up; on opening it, the contents proved to be three letters left by the lost Admiral, Count de la Pérouse; (1) one was addressed to the French Government, the others merely stated who he was and that he had touched there, but was gone in search of a southern continent. As these letters bore a date one month after his leaving Port Jackson, and are the last tidings which were ever heard of him, they seem to bear out the general opinion which had always existed, that the unfortunate French nobleman had been lost on some of the reefs about Van Diemen's Land or, at least, somewhere in this part of the South Seas.' (2)

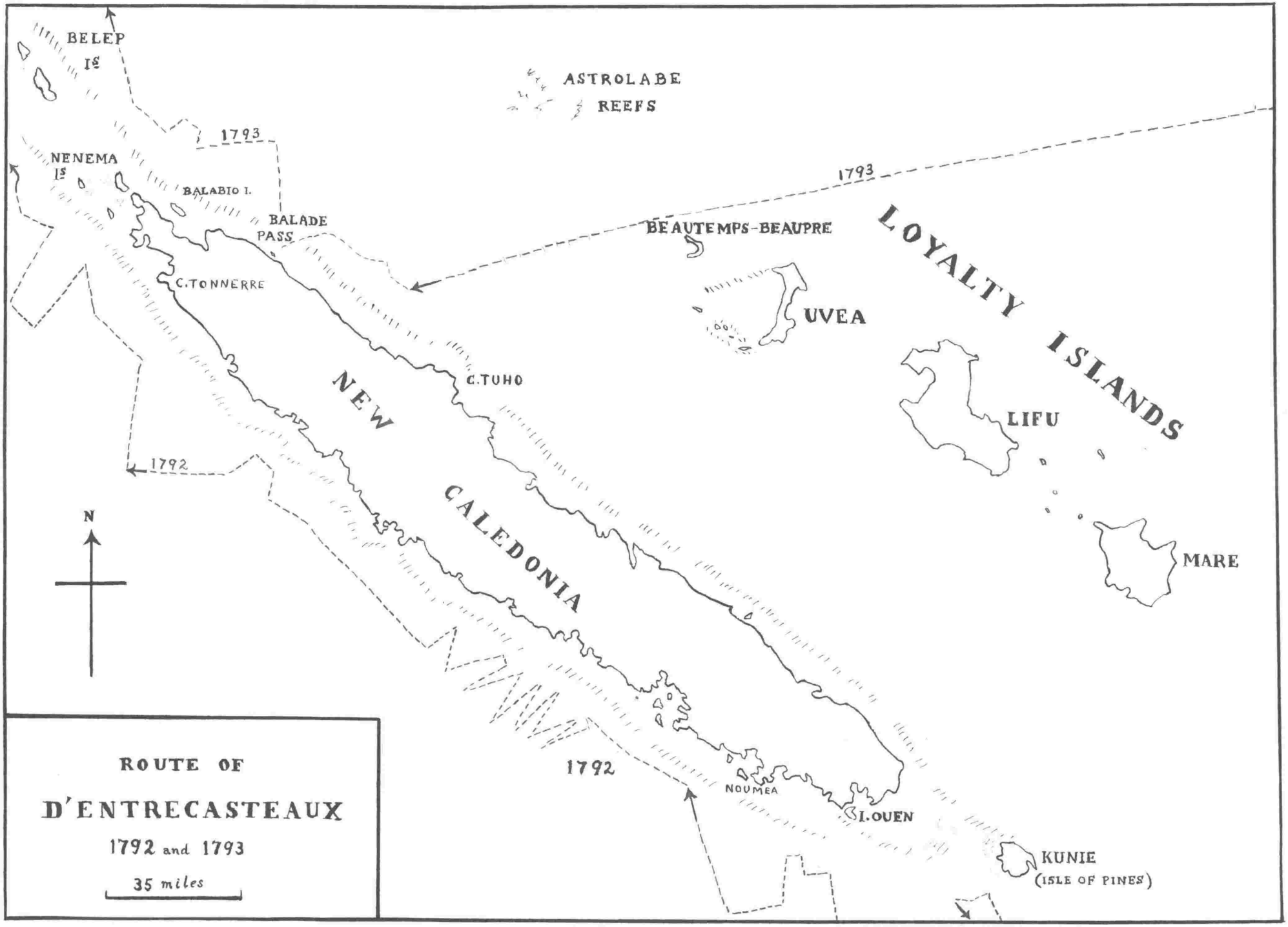
What Bunker did with the letters is not clear, as no other report of them exists. They may have been figments of his imagination, or the whole thing may have been an elaborate scheme to embarass Dillon; if they existed, they were probably documents left behind by members of d'Entrecasteaux's expedition, and misunderstood by Bunker, whose knowledge of French was probably very slight. The search for La Pérouse was not to begin in earnest until the Recherche and the Espérance reached New Caledonia They sailed on 28 May 1792, and were favoured by constant south-westerlies on their way across the Tasman; the voyage from

(1) La Pérouse was a count, but never an Admiral.
(2) Tasmanian Almanack, 1827, p. 68.

Tasmania to New Caledonia was uneventful.(1) On 16 June, the Isle of Pines was sighted. According to some, (2) La Pérouse had probably landed here, though this is impossible to prove. However, d'Entrecasteaux sailed carefully along the western coast, avoiding the dangerous reefs that fringe it, and taking care not to pass at night beyond the furthest point observed on the previous day.(3) From 18 June to 26 June, this rule was scrupulously observed, and Beautemps-Beaupré produced some dependable charts of the coastline - although the French missed the pass to the present harbour of Noumea. It was the first exploration of the western coast, unless of course La Pérouse had carried it out.

High seas, contrary winds and the frequent dangers made them more cautious, and between the 26 and the 28 June, the ships were sailing a safe distance away from the reef, so that the charting done on those days is less reliable. They were by now at the northern extremity of New Caledonia; on the 28 June, one of the men, Moulin, sighted a small low island to the north of the mainland: it was to be named after him - but the chain of reefs continued beyond New Caledonia itself. 'All hope I had of landing in New Caledonia or in the surrounding islands being destroyed, it seemed important to me to continue along the full length of this chain, and to go around it, if possible, up to the point where Captain Cook was able to land, the only point perhaps where

(1) Rossel Voyage, vol. I, p.102.
(2) Jules Garnier, in Edition du Centenaire, p.389. For a recent discussion of this point, see J.P. Faivre and others, Nouvelle Calédonie, Géographie et Histoire, (Paris, 1955), pp.76-7.
(3) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p.104.


BELEP Is
ASTROLABE REEFS
1793
NENEMA Is
BALABIO I.
BALADE PASS
1793
BEAUTEMPS-BEAUPRE
LOYALTY ISLANDS
C. TONNERRE
UVEA
C. TUHO
NEW CALEDONIA
LIFU
1792
N
MARE
1792
NOUMEA
I. OUEN
KUNIE (ISLE OF PINES)
ROUTE OF
D'ENTRECASTEAUX
1792 and 1793
35 miles

No 17

one can land in this long stretch of coast.' (1) On 30 June, the reef seemed to be ending, but on the following day another island was seen ahead - Ile Surprise - and once more the line of reefs: the two French ships had missed the Grand Passage, and, having left the Récifs des Français, were now approaching the group which they were to call Huon Islands and D'Entrecasteaux Reef.

On 3 July, the reef finally ended, and the expedition sailed in a north-easterly direction towards the Solomon Islands. Land was sighted to the northeast on 9 July - it was Hammond Island (New Georgia); later on the same day Shortland's Eddystone was recognised; on the 10th, the two ships sailed south of Treasury Islands, and veered north towards Bougainville Island. Groups of natives were seen, but no contact was made at this stage; the weather became overcast, and visibility remained poor for several days, so that the French were not even able to make certain that Bougainville and Buka were separated islands; they seemed joined by low-lying land(2). Just before they left Buka, natives in canoes came out to meet them. Remembering their reputation, d'Entrecasteaux was very cautious towards them, but music had power to soothe their savage breasts: 'M. de St Aignan played them a fairly lively air on the violin, and the sound of this instrument, new to them, appeared to please them greatly; they laughed and jumped on the benches of their canoes. They offered in exchange for this violin not only the bow which we had already

(1) Ibid., vol. I p. 110.
(2) Ibid., p. 122.

asked of them, but also some clubs which they had not yet showed us.' (1)

On 15 July, the ships sailed for New Ireland; two days later they ~~ships~~ anchored in Carteret Harbour. The expedition was in need of water and of firewood; both were obtained here, although the wood carried with it the disadvantage of being infected with insects that spread in turn throughout the wooden ships, until a few months later, 'they had multiplied to such a degree in the several months that we had spent in the tropics that they caused us extreme discomfort. These insects were not satisfied with our biscuits, they attacked the clothes, the paper, etc, anything was good for them... but what surprised me more was the speed with which they emptied my ink-well when I forgot to stopper it.' (2)

The two ships spent a week at this anchorage; it rained every day, and the coconuts which they had hoped to obtain here were very scarce. 'One is led to believe that since the days of M. De Carteret, who found them in great quantities, the coconut trees must have been destroyed, because we found hardly a halfdozen of these trees.' (3) On 24 July 1792, they weighed anchor, not without trouble. 'Since there was nothing to keep us at this anchorage, and since a longer stay would only prove most harmful to the health of the crews, on the 24th, at 9.30 in the morning, we raised anchor with much difficulty on account

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(1) Ibid., p. 124.
(2) La Billardière, Relation du Voyage, p. 378.
(3) Fragments de Journaux anonymes sur l'Espérance, S. Hy. M. Cn 105-5., p. 309.

of the inconstant squalls that were blowing up; The Espérance which weighed anchor a moment later than we did, found herself forced to anchor again in the pass. Her cable was cut at once at 10 fathoms by rocks and corals, she lost also her bower-anchor; a slight breeze got her out of this dangerous situation. As soon as she had joined us, we sailed on our way.' (1)

The route took them through St George's Channel, to New Hanover, which was sighted on the morning of the 27th; early on the morning of the 28th, the first of the Admiralty Islands was sighted, and a few hours later a second one hove into sight.

'The general's intention being to visit these islands with great care to ascertain whether there are indeed traces of the two ships which had been under the orders of M. De la Pérouse, and whether that commander and those who shared his misfortune had not taken refuge there; a course was set for the southern-most [island]; we soon saw that a chain of breakers which surrounds it does not allow it to be approached, but nevertheless we sailed along it for a distance of approximately one and a half miles. When imagination is predisposed, illusion easily follows: a tree, of an enormous circumference, stretched along the reef, several branches of which rose at right angles to the trunk, had led several people to believe that it could be the remains of a shipwrecked vessel, of which only the keel and a part of the ribs and masting remained, but those who were blinded by

(1) Ibid., p. 362.

preconceived notions were soon disabused, and recognised their mistake. Indeed, as one follows with one's eyes this line of reefs, one could in five or six places see the same kinds of trees which, in their old age, had been overthrown by high winds. A group of natives appeared on one of the spits of land: they were completely naked, and nothing indicated any intercourse with Europeans.' (1)

As d'Entrecasteaux added, 'it would have been necessary to admit that a whole fleet had been shipwrecked to hold on to the belief that these were the remains of ships.' (2) It seemed clear that the information which de St Félix had forwarded to d'Entrecasteaux in Capetown was of no value: the natives, far from wearing French uniforms, wore practically nothing, and the French wondered whether the islanders' plaited belts, and their bracelets and necklaces of white shells, had not, from a distance, been taken for European clothes. Nevertheless, d'Entrecasteaux sailed to the easternmost island, and sailed slowly along the entire group. There was no clue of any kind anywhere.

Off the Negros Islands, a small group near the main island of Manus, he tried to trade by night, in order to save time. Goods were placed on a plank, which also carried a lighted candle. The natives had already been terrified when d'Entrecasteaux, to amuse them, had fired a rocket which burst into

(1) Fragments de Journaux anonymes sur la Recherche, p.363-4.
(2) Rossel, Voyage, Vol.I, pp.132-3.

a golden shower overhead; the light that now floated towards them on the calm sea was equally frightening, and they did nothing beyond watch it burn from a respectful distance.

D'Entrecasteaux did not anchor anywhere in the Admiralty Islands. On 2 August, he had reached the Hermit Islands, by the next day he had passed Providence Island and the Ninigo group. The plan was now to call at some settlement in the Dutch Indies, there to obtain refreshments, before returning to Van Diemen's Land. The ships' westerly progress was slow: on 8 August, they were becalmed as they struggled to cross the Line three days later, 'for the sixth time, the Espérance nearly collided with us. She came and broke the Flemish horse of our spritsail, on our bow;' (1) on the following day, she was out of sight, and the Recherche had to fire rockets to help her rejoin. (2)

As the expedition sailed on towards the Moluccas, a strong northerly current flowing from Geelvink Bay in eastern New Guinea made them suspect - wrongly - the existence of a great river flowing into the Bay. By the end of August, they were threading their way through the Dutch-held islands, and on 6 September they anchored off Amboina. It was their first contact with Europeans since their departure from Capetown seven months earlier - a significant break in the fast moving times in which they lived. The flight of Louis XVI and his recapture at Varennes, which had

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(1) La Billardière, Relation, vol. I., p. 227. A Flemish horse is a footrope beneath a yard.
(2) Fragments de Journal anonyme sur la Recherche, pp. 350-60

led to his deposition, had taken place before their departure from France; but meanwhile the situation had deteriorated much further, especially in France's relations with the other nations of Europe. Although they did not know it, war had actually begun in April, the monarchy had been abolished, and the French armies, after a confused period of gains and losses, were about to overrun Belgium as far as the Dutch frontier itself.

To the local governor at Amboina, d'Entrecasteaux's papers, although signed by the Dutch authorities, appeared suspect. Was an official French expedition still to be assisted, in view of the possibility of France and Holland being actually at war? D'Entrecasteaux believed that, had the Recherche and the ~~Astrolabe~~ Espérance been simply trading vessels, he would have met with less trouble, for it would have been a simple matter to bribe the officials, and to engage in a little contraband profitable to both sides. The governor could not, however, refuse to help merely on the strength of rumours from Europe, and he reluctantly provided them with water and food.

When the ships left, a week later, on 13 October, they sailed south-west towards New Holland. The water obtained at Amboina soon went bad; The stock of food taken on board, both live and salted, filled up the vessels: 'the General had allowed the crews to load pigs and poultry for themselves; as a result our ships were cluttered all over with them. They had nearly all been put in the 'tween-decks, and we were all the more inconvenienced in that the noisome smell that they gave out was considerably worsened by the heat of the climate.'(1)

(1) La Billardière, Relation, vol. I, p. 370.

The crews had been augmented by a number of deserters from other ships - six on the Espérance and one on the Recherche, a boy of French extraction who had been serving on a Dutch ship, and whom the French may have encouraged to escape, remembering the assistance given to Bougainville by a similar deserter. (1)

Timor was sighted on 19 October; on the 25th, the expedition sailed past Savu, and entered the Indian Ocean. At the beginning of November, strong south-easterly winds blew up which 'drove us to the West, to such a great distance from the coast of New Holland that I was compelled to abandon the plan I had formed of landing in Dirck Hartoges bay (sic), named Shark Bay by Dampier, the position of which I should have liked to have fixed.' (2) In fact, d'Entrecasteaux was blown out as far as 99°13' east and 30°8' south, a position reached on 23 November 1792; he then veered east and, favoured by the belt of westerlies which he reached shortly afterwards, sailed to Cape Leeuwin. Land was seen at dawn on 5 December, having the appearance of a group of offshore islands; this was the land described by de St Allouarn, and d'Entrecasteaux named them Iles St Allouarn. (3) There are, however, no islands there; it was Heycinet who, while on Baudin's expedition cleared up this question. 'When one is nine leagues from the shore, the interval which separates Cape Gosselin from Cape Hamelin seems to be broken up into a fairly large number of small islands; this effect is produced by the more prominent hillocks of the coast, and perhaps by a mirage. One must be three leagues from land

(1) Fragments de Journeaux Anonymes sur l'Espérance, p. 281
(2) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 175.
(3) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 177.

in order to see it clearly?'(1) In an earlier comment on these so-called islands, Freycinet had written: 'On 9 March in the morning, we passed the small island of St Allouarn, which is nothing more than an arid rock.' (2) Continuing in a south-easterly direction, d'Entrecasteaux passed a headland which Beautemps-Beaupré named Pointe d'Entrecasteaux, as it remains today. King George Sound, which would have provided a good anchorage, was seen on 6 December, but too late for the ships to alter course. The expedition now sailed north-east and east along the south coast. Cap Riche was discovered and named on the 7th, but on the following day a group of islands was seen ahead, and in a short time the ships found themselves surrounded by them; as they tried to tack their way out of this archipelago, the wind changed to a south westerly, driving them further inshore. The Espérance, slow and awkward, stood little chance of getting clear of this labyrinth. Huon de Kermadec decided that the only thing to do was to sail boldly ahead, and seek a sheltered anchorage among the islands; he was successful in this, finding shelter in a bay where the Recherche soon joined him. The islands received the name of Recherche Archipelago, and the bay was called Esperance Bay.

The French now landed. The naturalist-chaplain from the Recherche, Louis Ventenat, fell into the sea, and had to be hastily rescued from a prowling shark. La Billardière and Riche went their separate ways, seizing the opportunity to

(1) Freycinet, Voyage de Découvertes, p.155.
(2) Péron-Freycinet, Voyage, vol.II, p.195.

gather specimens from this unknown region; the latter nearly paid with his life for his enthusiasm when, having mistaken a swampy lake for the sea, he lost his way for two days among the sand dunes. There was, however, very little fresh water to be had here, less in fact than the expedition consumed in a single day.

D'Entrecasteaux sailed on 17 December, and spent five days struggling against easterly winds; he was then able to continue eastward, still meeting occasional contrary winds and patches of fog. The coast, however, was unattractive. 'It is not surprising that Nuyts (its discoverer) gave no detail on this barren coast, the appearance of which is so uniform that the most fertile imagination would find nothing to say about it.' (1) On 24 December the coast was high and steep. 'It was a steeply cut cliff, of even height [which] resembled the ramparts of a fortified city.' (2).

The difficulty, however, was the shortage of water, which, by the end of December, had become critical. There seemed no likelihood of a satisfactory anchorage, and d'Entrecasteaux realised that, even if he found one, there could be no guarantee that there would be water there. It was now the beginning of summer, and watercourses in this arid region were probably drying up. On 2 January 1793 de Kermadec told him that the water on board the Espérance would last only for the journey to Tasmania: if they delayed any longer on the Australian coast, a dangerous situation would be bound to arise. The winds were still blowing

(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 219.
(2) Fragments de Journaux anonymes sur l'Espérance, p. 292.

from the east, and d'Entrecasteaux was forced to give up his intention of sailing along the coast as far as St Francis Islands. On 3 January, being in 31° 49' south and 131°40' east, just past Head of Bight Bay he gave instructions for the ships to go south and south-west to Van Diemen's Land. In less than one month, he had explored minutely the stretch of coast between Cape Leeuwin and the Hampton Tableland, to a point not far distant from Head of Bight, where the mighty arc of the Australian Bight begins to curve outwards to the South-east - a distance of 900 miles.

Ill-luck, which dogged him throughout the voyage, just prevented him from making a most important discovery. While sailing to Van Diemen's Land, he found himself further west than his reckoning indicated, and he wondered whether a current flowing between a strait between Australia and Tasmania was not responsible for this difference. 'I proposed to go up to Hicks Point, when I left Van Diemen's Land, in order to examine whether that land is separated from New Holland,' he wrote on 11 January.(1) It was not to be, however, for he realised when the time came that he would not be able to do more than to carry out a perfunctory examination of the coast, which might have to be so brief that, except by the greatest good fortune, it would yield no positive results.

'I should have liked to verify whether there is a strait to

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(1)Rossel, Voyage, Vol.I, p.224.

the south of this Cape, as I had thought during the crossing from Nuyts Land to the Southern Harbour (1), on account of the strong currents that we had felt between the parallels of the 32nd degree of southern latitude and the 36th degree. But we had tarried too long away from the regions where we could hope to find traces of M. de la Pérouse, to stay longer in order to carry out an investigation which I would have been forced to leave unfinished.' (2)

De Rossel was writing in 1808 and he could be accused of crediting his chief with more prescience than can be justified, since Bass and Flinders had discovered Bass Strait in 1798, and the fact was well-known at the time when he was writing; but de Rossel is a reliable officer, and the comment he attributes to d'Entrecasteaux is confirmed by La Billardière, whose own book was published in Paris in 1801.

'We were carried yesterday some 23' west and, on the 18 Nivose some 21' in the same direction. We found at midday 35°30' of latitude south; the speed of these westward currents is perhaps the result of some channel separating the land of New Holland from Cape Diemen between Hicks Point and Furneaux island. Captain Cook, when surveying the eastern part of New Holland, saw no land in this space which is some 20 myriamêtres (200 kilomètres) in extent, and believed himself at the entrance of a great gulf. Perhaps it is in this part of the coast that begins the opening of a Channel which, after forming several

(1) Recherche Bay, Tasmania.
(2) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 260.

sinuosities, goes on to open out in the west at the same latitude as the one where we had felt such strong currents.' (1)

Credit can thus hardly be denied to d'Entrecasteaux for deducing the existence of the strait; what is more open to question is whether the French inspired the British discovery of Bass Strait. Both de Rossel and d'Entrecasteaux's biographer, Hulot, make this claim. Without giving precise references, Hulot states that 'the careful reading of [Flinders'] A Voyage to Terra Australis shows clearly enough that Bass and Flinders were inspired by the work of our frigates... no one before the French admiral had thought of considering Tasmania as an island separate from New Holland, and it is by following his indications that the English navigators discovered the Straits.' (2) De Rossel, on the same point, is less definite. 'No doubt,' he writes, 'the British Admiralty was able to make use of the information she drew from it [the journals of the expedition] when, in 1797 or 1798, she sent an expedition to examine the discoveries made in Van Diemen's Land.'(3)

Hulot overstates his case somewhat, for William Bayly, the astronomer on board Furneaux's Adventure, had written in his diary on 17 March 1773: 'it seems evident that this is the mouth of a strait which separates New Holland from Van Diemen's Land,'(4) but, at the same time, no one had sailed so close to the western

(1) La Billardière, Relation du Voyage, pp.427-8. La Billardière did not have access to d'Entrecasteaux's journal at this time, so that he is probably reporting discussions which took place in the ship in January 1793.
(2) Hulot, D'Entrecasteaux 1737/1793, p.133.
(3) Rossel, Voyage, vol.I, p.XII.
(4) K.M.Bowden, George Bass, p.57.

extremity of Bass Strait, and thus had the opportunity of being affected by the currents. To what extent d'Entrecasteaux influenced the Bass-Flinders expedition remains in doubt; probably not at all. Yet the English would have become aware of d'Entrecasteaux's belief when, on the way home, the remnants of the French Expedition were captured by them, and the documents transferred to the Sceptre, (Captain Essington). They were not returned until the Peace of Amiens in 1802 and, as Sir Joseph Banks stated, the charts had been meanwhile copied at the Admiralty. (1)

The English thus had time to study the conclusions of the French and to forestall them. As Baudin was to realise, the discovery of Bass Strait, following on the extensive exploration of southern Tasmania by the French, had important political implications, because it provided a legal basis for a French settlement along the Derwent river, spreading into the island to the northern shores of Van Diemen's Land. From there, the French could command the southern route to Port Jackson from the Indian Ocean, and thus threaten the nascent British colony in New South Wales. D'Entrecasteaux's and La Billardière's journals were therefore of great importance to the British Government.

Let us add, in passing, that there were no political motives underlying the d'Entrecasteaux expedition, which was a humanitarian and geographical undertaking set in motion at a time

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(1) G.R.de Beer, 'The Relations between Fellows of the Royal Society and French Men of Science when France and Britain were at War,' in Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, vol. 9,(1952),No.2., p.252.

when the French Republic could ill afford it. Although, as Hulot says, the French might have been able to claim some rights over the south of Tasmania, (1) there is no evidence that this was in the mind of those who had despatched the two ships. To say, as did J.B. Walker, that 'the lengthened stay of d'Entrecasteaux, the minute and elaborate nature of his surveys, and the space his historian devotes to a description of the country and its advantages, indicate some further objects than mere geographical research', (2) is to disparage, without any justification, a group of able and conscientious geographers who had no intention of making Tasmania their main place of call until chance revealed to them the remarkable havens of d'Entrecasteaux Channel.

To d'Entrecasteaux, therefore, must go credit for the theoretical deduction of the existence of Bass Strait; only his sense of duty and his mission prevented him from delaying long enough to make the actual discovery that would have brought greater fame to him and, possibly, given another outpost to the French Empire.

The expedition arrived in Recherche Bay on 21 January 1793, thus completing a full circle round Australia. Water, fish and firewood were obtained, and the men soon recovered their health, which had become impaired by the privations suffered in the three

(1) Hulot, D'Entrecasteaux 1737-1793, p.139.
(2) Walker, Early Tasmania, p.8.

months since they had left Amboyna. They noticed that the garden they had sown in Port du Nord, the northern bay of Recherche Bay, had not developed; but when the ships left this port, and were forced by the lack of wind to anchor in Adventure Bay on 22 February, they found that the trees planted there by Captain Bligh in 1788 were doing well, and - dutiful naturalists - they weeded around the young trunks to promote their growth. Fishing in Adventure Bay was extremely rewarding: the crew of the Espérance laid in a three-months' supply of dried and salted fish.(1)

D'Entrecasteaux Channel was again explored, and the charts drawn up in 1792 were revised and added to; islands and headlands received the names of their discoverers or of other members of the expedition - Beautemps-Beaupré's charts show over twenty such names, but not all have survived.(2) A surmise that Frederick Henry Bay and Marion Bay led by a narrow channel into Storm Bay, and that Tasman Peninsula was therefore an island, was later proved erroneous.

The real importance of the second visit to Van Diemen's Land lay in the contacts with the Tasmanian aborigines. In 1792, only a few had been seen, and it had been practically impossible to approach them, but in 1793 the natives themselves made the first friendly overtures. 'The naturalists made a great number of excursions in this country. On 7 February, one of the boats from the Recherche was sent to fetch them from the Port which they had been visiting. Three of the crew, asleep with a feeling of safety, for on our first call and since our

(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol.I, p. 262.
(2) See on this La Nomenclature Française en Australie et Tasmanie, by A. de Fleurieu.

arrival we had seen no natives, were very surprised when they awoke to see, some distance away from them, a fairly considerable number of inhabitants of this country. The latter came towards them with every appearance of good faith, and gave proof of innate kindness by indicating that they had not wished to disturb their sleep. Our three men, no longer in doubt as to their pacific disposition, began to dance with them. In the midst of all this, the naturalists arrived, and they were surprised and delighted by this development. Since it was time to return on board, and having in vain invited some of them to accompany them,(1) they left them, after giving them a few presents. On the following day, M. Legrand was detailed to accompany these same naturalists, and he spent the day with the natives who showed every sign of satisfaction when he arrived. As soon as everyone had landed, these good people took them, arm in arm, to their huts, made of a few branches and covered over with leaves.' (2)

There does not seem to have been any incidents between the sailors and the Tasmanians who, unlike other natives encountered by the French, were not thieves, and indeed seemed quite indifferent towards articles of European manufacture. The visitors, on the other hand, were quite eager to help these peaceful natives, whose standard of living was so poor. 'All the sailors, rivalling each other, gave up what they had in order to offer it to them.'(3)

(1) One of them was later persuaded to come on board, sat in d'Entrecasteaux's cabin, and accepted the gift of a cockerel. Fragments de Journal Anonyme sur la Recherche, p. 372.
(2) Fragments de Journaux anonymes sur l'Esperance, p. 249-50.
(3) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 236.

D'Entrecasteaux gave them implements of various kinds, teaching them their use as much as he could in the time. La Billardière entered a hut which he kindly describes as 'very artistically constructed', although he was soon to regret the tenacity of the vermin which soon attacked him. Determined not to lag behind in generosity, he gave a pair of trousers to a Tasmanian girl, endeavouring to explain to her as best he could the purpose of such a vestment.(1) D'Entrecasteaux, retaining not only his natural dignity but also his seriousness of purpose, had a vocabulary of the aborigines' language drawn up, and in order to avoid errors he required his officers to prepare their own lists separately, so that by comparison and by collation a reliable glossary could be obtained.(2) Both La Billardière and Rossel's books contain valuable accounts of the life and customs of these primitive people, for whom the French felt a real affection. It was an entirely appropriate coincidence that made Bruni Island the last refuge of the Tasmanians, just prior to their final extinction, for it had been named after a man who was their friend and who, had Fate willed it, would gladly have become their protector.(3)

The expedition sailed from Adventure Bay on 27 February. On the eve of the departure, Huon de Kermadec had fallen ill (4); it was the only cloud on the horizon at the close of what had

(1) La Billardière, Relation, vol. II, p.32.
(2) Rossel, Voyage, vol.I, p. 244.
(3) 'Ces hommes simples et bons, en qui l'on n'avait aperçu aucun des vices que l'on reproche à tous les habitants du Grand Océan' ... - Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p.236.
(4) Fragments de Journaux anonymes sur l'Espérance, p.255.

been a happy and enjoyable stay. A course was now set for New Zealand: d'Entrecasteaux did not intend to call there, for it was outside the scope of his intention, nor did he believe that he could, in a brief visit, add very much to the growing store of knowledge about the country and its people; he did, however, want to check the longitude of Cape Maria van Diemen and of North Cape, which could prove useful check points for later voyagers. 'Our journey from Adventure Bay to New Zealand offers nothing of note; it is the first crossing during which we met with no unfavourable winds'.(1) On 11 March, the ships arrived off Cape Maria van Diemen, and they sailed slowly towards North Cape. D'Entrecasteaux noted that smoke was rising over the easternmost of Three Kings Islands, a fact which led him to believe that they were inhabited, as Tasman had stated but Marion du Fresne had doubted. He did not encourage the Maoris, who came out to the ships in canoes from the Northland coast, but contented himself with a little desultory trading.(2) The expedition sailed away at dawn on the following day, going north-east towards Tonga.

On 15 March, in the late afternoon, an uncharted rock was sighted ahead; it was named Rocher de L'Espérance. On the next day at daybreak, another, a larger one, appeared: it was identified as Curtis Island; soon after, Macauley Island was seen. Both islands had been discovered in 1788 by Lieutenant Watts of the Penrhyn. In the evening of the 16th,

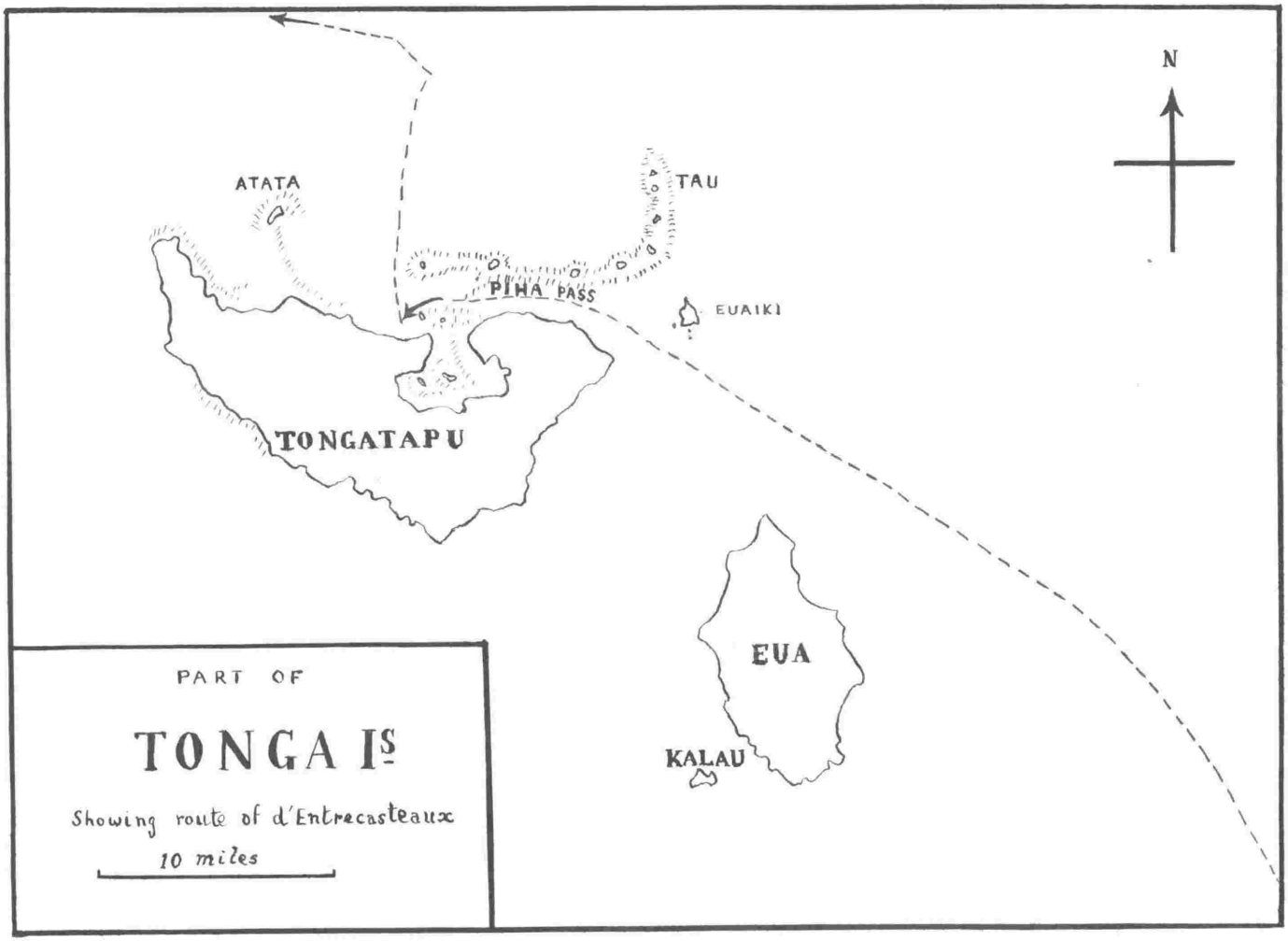
(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 269.
(2) Ibid., p. 272.

just as the sun was setting, it was thought that there was a further island ahead. It had been seen by Raoul, the 'pilote' of the Recherche; several others climbed to the topmast, and declared that they too could discern it in the dusk: it appeared to be larger than the others. The ships spent the night hove to, and at dawn on the 17th the island was plainly seen - it was named Raoul Island. (1) The group as a whole was called Kermadec Islands.

On 22 March, Eua was seen to the north; at dawn on the following day, the two ships veered east to reach Tongatapu, off the north coast of which they anchored. The islanders came in droves to welcome them, and soon a carnival atmosphere prevailed, with crowds milling around the French, pressing them to trade, or merely staring at the strange visitors. However, it was not easy to make oneself understood. 'The vocabulary found in Cook's Last Voyage was of slight assistance, either because of the difference between the pronunciation of the English and ours, or because most of the words that Cook thought belonged to the language of the Friendly Islands were, usually, merely words badly pronounced by the English, which the natives had repeated as a sign of approval, which may have led each side to believe that they were in agreement. At the beginning, we were often misled by this, and it was only by going back to the same subject that we were able to recognise the error of our first impressions.' (2) In an attempt to keep the natives off the ships - even hose-pipes had failed to dislodge the cheerful Tongans who soon grew

(1) Ibid., p. 274. But La Billardière calls it Ile de la Recherche; see his Relation, vol. II, p. 90.

(2) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 300. The point was that native words were spelt differently by the English and the French.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to appreciate the cooling showers - the French arranged a market on land where trade could proceed peacefully. The extent of the trade can be gauged by the fact that, in the space of a fortnight, the French bought four hundred pigs, five hundred head of poultry, as well as bananas, sugar canes, yams, and six hundred coconuts per day. Thefts, however, were a constant worry, and a source of friction between the sailors and the natives. To avoid a situation in which the French would be compelled to make use of their firearms, d'Entrecasteaux attempted to overawe the islanders by displaying the superiority of European weapons. Two birds were tied to a tree, and a French marksman advanced to shoot them, but he missed twice; a second Frenchman tried, but his gun misfired. Amid general laughter, a Tongan killed one of them with his bow at the first attempt.(1) Occasionally, a thief was caught, and made to disgorge his loot, sometimes being punished, as was the case with a group of natives who tried to steal an anchor. 'We administered a few blows with a rope's end and sent [them] back to land.' (2)

Serious clashes, however, were avoided, and before they left the French had regaled the islanders with a display of fireworks, which the Tongans had repaid with a 'fête' of dancers - d'Entrecasteaux generously commenting that he did not doubt 'that they would give the greatest pleasure, even at the theatre of the Opera.'

He was unable to obtain any information about La Pérouse:

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(1) Ibid., p. 279.
(2) Fragments de Journeaux anonymes sur l'Espérance, p. 255.

the natives remembered Cook and Bligh, and there werew vague rumours about a ship being seen off Vavau - but it seemed clear that the French had not been seen when they had sailed along the western islands of the Haápai group, and that they had not returned later.

The French sailed from Tonga on 9 April, taking on board 300 breadfruit plants for each ship, a number of which completed the voyage to Mauritius, and even to Paris, in spite of all their vicissitudes. The waters to the west of Tongatapu were still very imperfectly known, and d'Entrecasteaux sailed very nearly due west: 'I hoped that along this route, which no one had yet followed, I might discover some new island'.(1) But nothing was seen until the 15 April, when the Recherche sighted Erronan (the island of Futuna), and the Espérance sighted Aneityum; they sailed between Tana and Aneityum, the two southernmost islands of the New Hebrides group. They continued their westward journey, and on 18 April a large reef was seen. 'It is about nine to eleven miles long, and seven to eight miles wide from east to west. We saw two small wooded islands, situated at the eastern side of the reef, and a third, larger than the other two, in the middle; we named them Iles Beaupré.' (2) Beautemps-Beaupré Island is the northernmost of the Loyalty group which lies to the east of New Caledonia, running parallel with it and approximately fifty miles away.

There is some confusion in Rossel's account over what took place next, but it would appear that, after discovering Beautemps-Beaupré Island, the expedition continued towards New Caledonia,

(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 324.
(2) Ibid., vol. I, p. 326. La Billardière says of the island: 'to which I have given the name of citizen Beaupré', Relation, vol. II, p. 181.

and that some part of it - probably Mt Panie - was seen later on the same day; on the 19th the Espérance grounded near the coast, but was refloated without too much trouble; the ships then spent the next two days carrying out various manoeuvres in order to anchor in Balade Bay, which they did on 21 April 1793.

Trading with the natives began on the same day; the French landed on the 22nd. Thefts occurred immediately, two swords being stolen with particular boldness. On 23 April, a working party was attacked, and shots had to be fired to disperse the natives. It was their first contact with the inhabitants of New Caledonia, and the French were unimpressed: they found them surly, dishonest and warlike. La Billardière came across deserted huts and ruined crops(1); soon, there was evidence that there were cannibals. 'O frightful people!' wrote d'Entrecasteaux when this fact became obvious.(2) Yet Cook, when he had called at this very place, had been impressed by them, and the account given by Forster was so contrary to what the French were now experiencing that they rejected it as quite worthless and practically incomprehensible. Yet, there is no contradiction: all that had happened was that the natives were suffering from the consequences of inter-tribal warfare complicated by a famine brought on by a drought. The watercourse at which Cook had filled his casks was now dry, although this was the rainy season; the resulting famine - which also explains the

(1) La Billardière, Relation, vol. II, p. 228.
(2) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 339.

natives' frequent requests for food, and their reluctance to supply any to the French - had made them turn more openly to cannibalism, a practice easy to indulge in when a tribe is at war. It is also possible that Cook's men were under a tighter discipline, compared with French sailors of the revolutionary period, a fact that would make it more simple to explain why d'Entrecasteaux's men were involved in a number of incidents, although it does not quite accord with the excellence of their relations with the more placid Tasmanian aborigines.(1)

All this made it difficult for d'Entrecasteaux to question the natives about La Pérouse. He seemed to understand from some of them that two ships had once been seen off the west coast, but the language difficulty prevented him from being sure of this.(2) On 4 May, a canoe appeared, - 'a canoe with two sails, which seemed to us to have come from the open sea... There were seven men in it, but they were not like those of New Caledonia... We understood from them that they came from an island named Hohoua, and they indicated to us the direction in which this island lay by showing us the east-north-east.' (3) The men obviously had come from Uvea, just south of Beautemps-Beaupré Island, in the Loyalty group; here then was an opportunity to question men from an archipelago which d'Entrecasteaux had barely skirted, but they were not seen again, having no doubt returned to their island.

While this was going on, the naturalists went on brief, cautious excursions, and Beautemps-Beaupré worked on his charts.

(1) For a discussion of these points, see Yves Person, La Nouvelle-Calédonie et l'Europe, 1774-1854, pp. 24-5.
(2) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, pp. 347-8.
(3) Ibid., p. 342.

By climbing a high hill, he was able to see Balabio Island to the north, and thus tie his observations of 1792 with those of the current year. On the Espérance, on 6 May, Huon de Kermadec, who had been ill since the departure from Tasmania, finally succumbed to 'a malignant fever'. At his own request, to prevent his body from being disinterred by the cannibalistic natives, he was buried on the off-shore islet of Poudioue, and at night.(1)

The expedition sailed on 9 May 1793. 'The few resources offered by the country, the ferociousness of the inhabitants, and the loss which we had just suffered there, made us forsake this harbour with the greatest satisfaction.' (2) D'Entrecasteaux sailed along the northern extension of the eastern reef - the Grand Récif de Cook - and, this time, correctly surmised the existence of a passage from east to west between this reef and D'Entrecasteaux Reef further north. On 13 May, the line of breakers ended, and the French sailed north-eastwards towards the Santa Cruz Islands.

At dawn on 19 May, they saw in the east a land that appeared to be divided into two islands: it was Utupua, which is almost bisected into two distinct islets by Basilisk Inlet. At the same time, though less distinctly, they discerned in the north another, larger island, which proved to be Santa Cruz; soon after, another, not shown on any chart, was discovered to the south-east; this - Vanikoro - they called Ile de la Recherche. Sailing to Santa Cruz, they sought an anchorage on the south

(1) Ibid., p. 345.
(2) Ibid., p. 362.

coast, but failed and, in addition, were attacked by natives. They proceeded along the west coast to the north, intending to anchor in Trevanion's Lagoon - Graciosa Bay - in order to enquire about La Pérouse; the current, however, carried them too far, and they gave up the attempt. Watching the shore closely, for there were large numbers of natives to be seen, and among them there might be some clue to the presence of survivors of a European wreck, they sailed along the north coast as far as Cape Byron and back. There were no white men, no articles of French manufacture, no signals. Beautemps-Beaupré had time to prepare a careful chart of the island, adding much to the work of Carteret, since the Englishman had not seen the south coast. Mildly regretting that he could not see Swallow Islands, though Tinakulu volcano was plainly visible in the north-west, d'Entrecasteaux sailed away on 23 May towards the Solomons.

He never visited the island which he had called Ile de la Recherche. It was a tragically ironical name, because it was there that La Pérouse's ships had, in fact, been wrecked, and it is possible that, at the time, two survivors were still living on the island. D'Entrecasteaux's failure to locate the remnants of the 1788 expedition has weighed heavily on his memory, but with two heavy ships, and with an immense expanse of dangerous seas to explore, only extreme good fortune could have brought success to his mission. He had been set a time

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limit, and the funds allocated to him were not inexhaustible. What was needed to find La Pérouse and his men was a slow and careful combing through the entire area of search by using small boats to explore every atoll, as well as detachments of men to visit the interior of islands where it might be suspected that white men were being kept prisoner. The undertaking would have required several years, the cost would have been enormous and, although the gain to science and geography would have been very considerable, it was more than any country could afford to risk, for there was the possibility that the Astrolabe and the Boussole had been lost at sea with all hands. D'Entrecasteaux, who spent a large proportion of his time in exploration and charting, was conscious of his instructions - which he endeavoured to follow more closely than any other French explorer of the Pacific before him,- perhaps because he knew that, when he returned, he would have to meet, not a king interested in geography, who would be pleased to discuss any tangible result of the voyage, but a government of hard-faced men who might resent liberties taken by one who, already, had to live down his connections with the Old Regime.

Finding traces of La Pérouse in the unfriendly Solomon Islands was no easier. There must have come a time, indeed, when a general feeling of weariness and pointlessness must have spread through the ships. There were so many islands, so little time... Without luck, the expedition could be no more than a symbolic gesture. The route followed by d'Entrecasteaux in the Solomons illustrated this: Santa Ana and Santa Catalina - the two small islands off Cape Surville - were sighted on 25 May;

the ships sailed to the south of them, but did not stop, travelling along the south coast of San Cristobal until the 27th, when they rounded its western extremity, giving it the name of Cap de la Recherche. A number of canoes came out to the ships, inviting them, by gestures, to make for the land; in the evening of the 27th, two men climbed on board the Espérance, where they were shown over the ship and given presents. There were at this moment upward of sixty canoes around the vessels; suddenly, at about 4 a.m., arrows were shot at the French from one of these canoes, thus confirming the Europeans' opinion of native treachery. D'Entrecasteaux now sailed north-east to Ulawa, praising the accuracy of de Surville's work: the identification of the Arsacides as Mendaña's Solomons was no longer in doubt. (1)

He then veered back due west to the south coast of Guadalcanal, along which he sailed from 31 May to 3 June. Soon after, the weather became overcast and foggy, and it remained so for several days, when New Georgia was reached; on 6 June, the two ships were at the point where they had made their landfall in 1792. To continue the exploration of the archipelago at this stage would add but little to the chances of finding La Pérouse, or to hydrographical knowledge, and accordingly d'Entrecasteaux now went south to get into the latitude of his next place of

(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol.I, p.391.

search, the Louisiade archipelago. On 9 June, being in 11°28' of southern latitude, the ships veered east.

Now began a three weeks' navigation through practically uncharted and highly dangerous waters. Bougainville's Cap de la Délivrance was sighted on 11 June, and the island of which it forms the easternmost point was named after Rossel. The ships sailed cautiously along the reef-strewn northern side of the chain, giving to the islands the names of officers, scientists and men of the expedition: Piron Island, Joannet Island, Renard Island, St Aignan Island. The last of these - Misima - is the most considerable in size of this group, and like most of the others it has reverted to its native name.

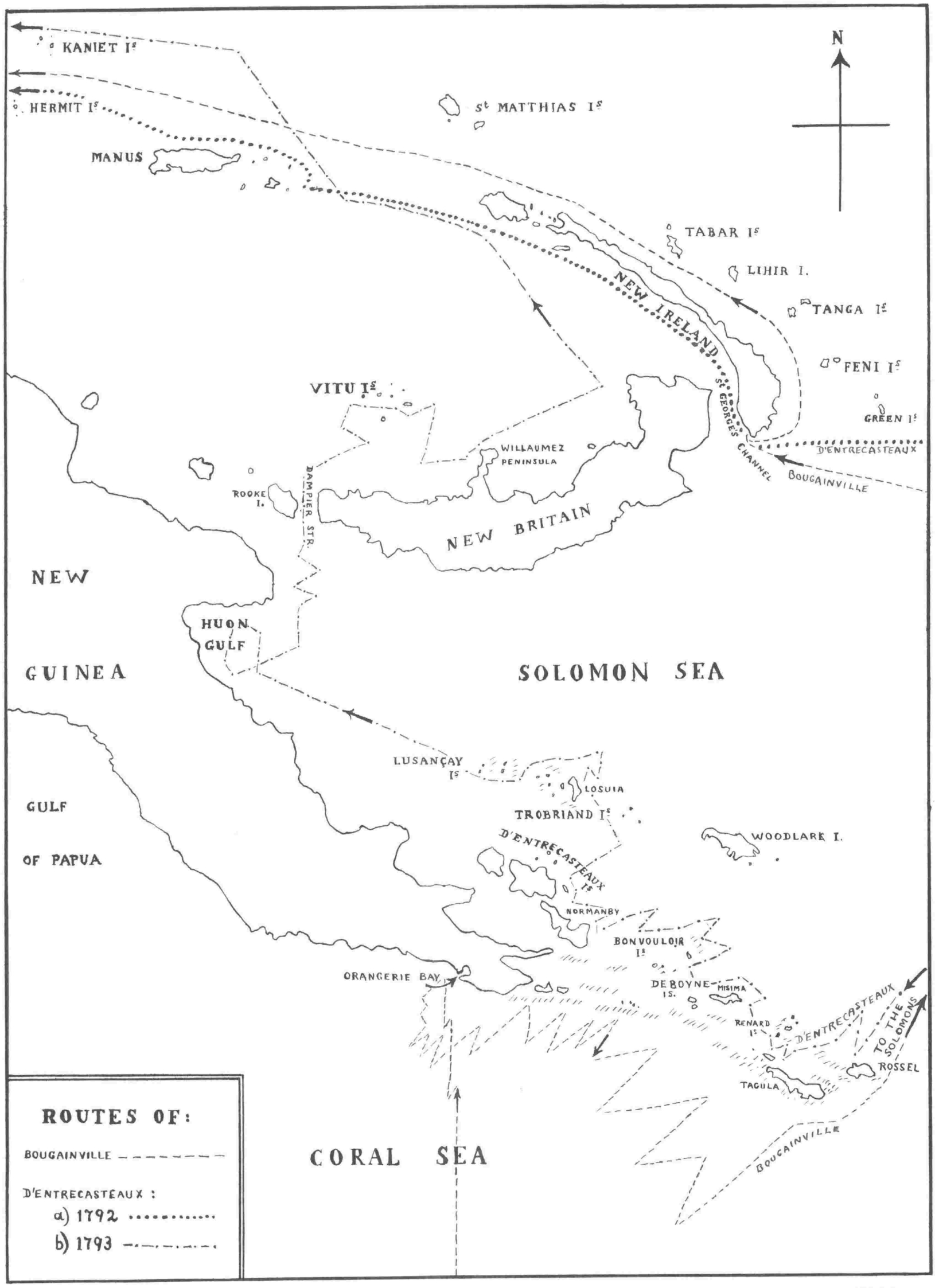
The small Bonvouloir archipelago, however, has retained the French name; the next group, running parallel with the eastern tip of New Guinea, is still known as D'Entrecasteaux Islands, but the numerous islands have not kept the individual names given to them by the French. The same applies to the Trobriand Islands to the north, and to the Lusançay Islands to the north east of the D'Entrecasteaux group: they have retained their collective name, but the French names of the individual islands, by which d'Entrecasteaux hoped to commemorate the men of the Espérance, have now largely been superseded by the native ones.

This work, which took from 11 June to 23 June, was carried out as carefully as possible, in spite of unsatisfactory weather. 'It is essential that I should warn [readers] that there could be several islands which have not been included in our charts: since our landfall on Cap de la Délivrance, the atmosphere has been constantly affected by a mist which, without being very thick,

was heavy enough to conceal from our view objects in the middle distance. But should other navigators discover a few islands which were not included in the charts drawn by M. Beautemps-Beaupré, I do not think that they will have great changes to make to the positions of those which are on the maps.' (1) It was no idle boast: although this work was done among dangerous reefs, in heavy and awkward vessels, in constant danger from currents and variable winds, the French survey of the northern Louisiades remained the only reliable one for a period of over one hundred years. (2)

This was not achieved without trouble from natives. In an attempt to persuade them to come on board and trade, Bonvouloir had swum towards a canoe which had come from the islands now named after him, but the men were timid and suspicious, and although he was unarmed they did not let him approach them. Off the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, stones were thrown at a boat which had been lowered from the Espérance to look for an anchorage, and the sailors were forced to fire warning shots. (3) 'Here again are men as savage and as treacherous as the inhabitants of New Caledonia, and identified as cannibals: these sad discoveries give an idea of the excesses to which mankind can abandon itself every time that a way of life is not tempered and softened by civilisation.' (4) This was a long way from Rousseau and Commerson; the gentle savage was now more savage than gentle.

(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, pp. 411-2.
(2) Findlay, Directory of the Navigation of the South Pacific, p. 690.
(3) Fragments de Journaux anonymes sur l'Espérance, p. 321.
(4) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 423.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WILLAUMEZ PENINSULA
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NEW BRITAIN
NEW
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LOSUIA
TROBRIAND Is
WOODLARE I.
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NORMANBY
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ORANGERIE BAY
DE BOYNE IS.
MISIMA
RENARD Is
D'ENTRECASTEAUX
TO THE SOLOMONS
ROSSEL
TAGULA
BOUGAINVILLE
CORAL SEA
ROUTES OF:
BOUGAINVILLE
D'ENTRECASTEAUX :
a) 1792
b) 1793

Nº16

New Guinea was sighted on 24 June 1793, and on the following day the ships entered the great gulf along the north-east coast, which is now known as Huon Gulf. The weather was again clouding over, and with little wind they could make no progress. 'On the 27th in the morning, the weather did not allow us to distinguish objects. We stayed hove to until midday...'(1) 'On the morning of the 28th, the weather was so overcast that we did not see the land: the sea was very rough, and the westerly breeze so weak that we could hardly keep to our course.' (2) The situation improved, however, and they were able to get out of the gulf. 'At dawn on 29 June, we sighted Cape King William; the mountain which ends it is very barren. We sailed towards Dampier Strait. The frigate sailed over some shoals which the reflection of the sun had not allowed us to notice; shortly after, we found ourselves among a number of reefs, and our situation became alarming; finally, after various manoeuvres, we freed ourselves.'(3) The danger had, in fact, been very real. 'Since the sun was shining straight ahead of us, the lookout was not able to see in time some shoals over which we passed at 8 a.m., with very high waves. Once over this danger, we thought ourselves safe, when, three-quarters of an hour later, we found ourselves between two shoals, very close together, forming a cul-de-sac, out of which we could not come in view of the SSE winds which were driving us further into it. The commander ordered us to tack at once, but there was no time to change sail for this manoeuvre to succeed, then our vessel

(1) Fragments de Journaux anonymes sur l'Espérance, p.326.
(2) Rossel, Voyage, vol.I, p.431.
(3) Fragments de Journaux anonymes sur l'Espérance, p.326

drifted towards the northern shallows, on which we were expecting our ship to be broken; suddenly, citizen Gicquel shouted from the top of one of the mainmast shrouds that he had just seen a break, in truth a very narrow one, but where, nevertheless, our frigate could pass. We at once made for this pass, and came out of this peril, the most fearful that we had run during this campaign.' (1)

The expedition had now reached the Vitu Islands, which d'Entrecasteaux called Iles Françaises. Again the names he gave to these islands - Ile Mérite, Ile Forestier, Ile Deslacs - have been replaced by the native ones. The weather was again overcast, and it was difficult for Beautemps-Beaupré to do any accurate work. On 3 July, the ships were approaching the northern coast of New Britain; the coast was hazy: Ile Willaumez is Willaumez Peninsula. The worthy Gicquel, whose name was given to one of the islands here to commemorate his recent action, has lost that honour.

The breeze was weak, and what there was of it was unfavourable. It took the ships four days to sail from Willaumez Peninsula to Cape Lambert, a distance of a little over one hundred miles. On 8 July, the French abandoned the search, and made for Java. They had gone as far as human endurance could take them.

'What wine we had left on board had gone sour; our flour was fermenting, and we were beginning to be short of every kind

(1) La Billardière, Relation, vol. II, p. 284.

of provisions. The health of our crews, worn out by the hardships of a long and painful navigation, required us to call at a country that would offer us enough resources to restore their strength and to replenish our supplies.'(1) 'We had been reduced for a long time to living off wormy biscuits and salted meat which had greatly deteriorated; in consequence, scurvy was already making great ravages in our ships. Most of us were forced to give up coffee, because it gave us extremely uncomfortable spasms.'(2) D'Entrecasteaux himself, suffering from scurvy aggravated by dysentery, was now so weak that he was unable to keep his own log.

Sailing past La Vendola on 11 July, the French checked their longitude with their figure of 1792: the difference was only 6'17". Intending to sail as quickly as possible to the Dutch East Indies, they went north of the Admiralty group, in order to avoid the difficult navigation through the archipelagos of small islands. On 16 July, they sighted, and sailed north of, the Anchorites Island of Bougainville.

Tropical rains now worsened the condition of the sick, and especially of d'Entrecasteaux. D'Auribeau, his former second-in-command, who had taken over the Espérance after Kermadec's death, urged him to leave the slower ship, and to hasten in the Recherche to the nearest port, but the admiral refused until 19 July, when he realised that it was his only hope. Reading Rossel, one

(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, p. 439.
(2) La Billardière, Relation, vol. II, p. 286.

realises that he had to face an additional hazard in the persons of his doctors. 'In the night of 19 to 20 July, the sufferings of M. D'Entrecasteaux became so violent, and caused him to become so agitated that we noticed an unsettling of his mind, which seemed to presage delirium. At daybreak, we again saw the Espérance at a great distance behind us. M. Renard, the Recherche's surgeon who had tried in vain all the resources of his art in order to alleviate his pain, expressed to me the wish to consult M. Joanet, his colleague from the other frigate, before attempting the last remedy left to him. We hove to at once in order to await the Espérance, and as soon as we were within reach I sent someone to warn M. d'Auribeau of the danger in which our unfortunate leader found himself, and I asked him to send M. Joanet, so that he might come and assist the Recherche's surgeon with his knowledge. It was agreed that the only way to alleviate the sharp pains of the patient was to give him a bath; but hardly was he in the water that his condition became desperate. Terrible convulsions began, and he lost consciousness; the two surgeons, assisted by the advice of M. La Billardière, were unable to calm him... at half-past seven in the evening he breathed his last.' (1)

D'Entrecasteaux was buried at sea the next day, north of the Ninigo Islands. Although, like many of the others, he had exhibited signs of scurvy, and was weakened by attacks of dysentery, his death was not expected (2): with his high sense of duty and leadership, he had concealed his condition from his colleagues. Although the search for La Pérouse had proved

(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, pp. 445-6. See also Jurien de la Gravière, Souvenirs d'un Amiral, vol. I, p. 223.
(2) La Billardière, Relation, vol. II, p. 286.

fruitless his mission had reached its end, and he had hoped to bring his ships home himself. It is quite probable that, if he had succeeded in reaching the Dutch possessions, his health would have been restored sufficiently for him to sail back to France, and it is equally probable that, with his prestige and personality, he would have been able to keep the expedition together in Surabaya.

From 22 to 30 July, the ships made little progress, being again troubled by weak and inconstant breezes. By the first day of August, they had reached the west of Schouten Island - having averaged less than forty miles per day. They did not reach Waigeo Island until the 11 August - the average daily run having fallen to thirty miles. It was not until 15 August that they were able to anchor on the north-east coast of Waigeo, near Boni Island. Although there were no Dutch there, the French were able to get some supplies from the surly natives for their scurvy cases, which now numbered more than sixty. The naturalists, in spite of their own ill-health, were able to gather a rich crop of specimens. There was, however, no news from Europe.

The expedition sailed again on 27 August 1793, with d'Auribeau so ill that Rossel took over effective command. The former had been so indisposed when d'Entrecasteaux had died that de Rossel had taken over the Recherche, while d'Auribeau, although the senior man, had remained on his own ship; the change-over had been effected at Boni on 20 August, but it was purely a nominal move, for d'Auribeau was still very weak and getting worse. The stay at Boni did him little good: on 28 August, the Recherche signalled the Espérance for Joanet, the ship's surgeon, to come

once again to the assistance of the Recherche's own doctor; he found that d'Auribeau had lost consciousness.(1) It seemed as though history were repeating itself; but this time, whatever remedies the two surgeons, may have applied, d'Auribeau survived.

De Rossel was left with a difficult decision to make: the obvious thing was to sail as quickly as possible to a main Dutch settlement, such as Surabaya, in order to give his crews a rest of several weeks; however, with d'Auribeau now desperately ill, he considered it wiser to make for some smaller, but nearer, settlement. Accordingly, on 30 August, he set course for Caieli, in Buru.

On 3 September, the ships arrived there, and de Trobriand was despatched to announce their arrival to the Dutch Resident. Here at last was a European settlement: however unprepossessing, however small, it was a pleasing sight, heralding the end of their tribulations. 'Our only wish now was to get closer to our homeland; at such a distance from our native land, any European became a compatriot, any Frenchman would have been welcomed as a member of our families.' (2) The Dutch Resident was pleased to see the French, and helped them as much as he was able; elderly natives came to see them with tales of Bougainville's visit, which they remembered with pleasure.(3)

The stay, which lasted nearly a fortnight, helped many of the scurvy cases to recover, although d'Auribeau remained

(1) Rossel, Voyage, vol. I, pp. 465-6.
(2) Ibid., vol. I, p. 471.
(3) Ibid., vol. I, p. 477

'deprived of the use of all his limbs'. Unhappily, this period witnessed the spread of another scourge - dysentery, which in the first fortnight of October affected over fifty men, and caused the death of five.(1) It was, therefore, still important to make as quickly as possible for Java and home. The expedition sailed on 15 September, intending to go through the Straits of Butung; it occurred to de Rossel and d'Auribeau that it might be even quicker to go through the relatively unknown straits which separate the island of Muna from Celebes. Unhappily the Dutch charts in their possession were very vague on this point; early on 24 September, de Rossel despatched Legrand and Beautemps-Beaupré in a small boat to sound the straits; they were allowed two days for this work. Meanwhile, the naturalists visited Butung, gathering specimens of various kinds.(2) The boat returned on time, and Beautemps-Beaupré reported that, although there were shoals to be seen, the straits appeared to be navigable. De Rossel sailed to the furthest point reached by the boat, and sent the Recherche's longboat under de Welle to explore further. De Welle returned on the 29th; there was no safe channel. At dawn, the two ships turned back, and they did not enter Butung Strait until 2 October: ten days had been lost in the fruitless operation. It took another six days to negotiate this difficult passage. 'Had not M. Bougainville's chart shown us where was situated the outlet of the vast

(1) Ibid., vol. I, pp. 509-10.
(2) La Billardière, Relation, vol. II, pp. 301-2.

basin into which we had sailed, we should have been unable to discover it all that evening: moreover, this map seemed to us to be very exact, and the information that we obtained from the Voyage of this able navigator has been of great value to us.'(1)

The French called at the town of Butung on 8th and 9th October, intending to take on enough supplies to last them until they reached Surabaya. La Billardière endeavoured to meet the local sultan, but 'we did not know that gifts were necessary in order to get to him';(2) it did not really matter, for they obtained nearly all their requirements through local merchants. The health of the French was now showing some slight improvement - d'Auribeau was able to take over command once more - scurvy, if not dysentery, was being held at bay.

Yet, although they reached Surabaya on 19th October, their troubles were not at an end: d'Auribeau sent de Trobriand, the regular envoy, to announce their arrival, and to make all necessary arrangements; there was no news for five days - the two ships remained at anchor in the road outside the river mouth, and d'Auribeau noticed to his disquiet that none of the native fishing craft around them made any attempt to approach. On the 24th, anxious and suspecting that France and Holland might be at war, he sent Mérite under a flag of truce to get what news there might be; on the following day, a native brought a message from de Trobriand to the effect that the Dutch were awaiting news

(1)Rossel, Voyage, vol.I, p.499.
(2)La Billardière, Relation, vol.II, p.305.

from the Governor in Batavia; this delay boded no good.

'Fearing that the attitude of the Regency would not be any more favourable than that of the Surabaya Council, M. d'Auribeau considered that there was not a moment to lose, and that steps had to be taken to ensure the safety of the expedition. He called the officers of the two ships together, explained the situation to them, and asked their advice on the measures to be adopted. In spite of the great distress in which we found ourselves, we agreed unanimously to sail the next morning. We had, as has just been said, two-thirds of our complement sick of dysentery; the rest, still further reduced in number by the men on the two boats [sent to Surabaya], were in such a state of weakness that we were afraid that their health might break down during a lengthy navigation... But circumstances were forcing our hand, and we could hesitate no longer: it was necessary for us to sail to the Ile de France without delay, and by the least frequented route.' (1)

However, de Trobiand returned the same evening; the Dutch had agreed to receive the expedition. Pilots came on board in the morning and, on 27 October 1793, the ships anchored at the entrance to the river. In Surabaya, sickness and the Revolution achieved the dissolution of the expedition. D'Entrecasteaux might have managed to hold the contending elements together, as he had done in the face of many difficulties during the voyage, but d'Auribeau was, by birth and by upbringing, a royalist, while

(1)Rossel, Voyage, vol.I, pp.578-9.

de Rossel himself, although more tactful, could not ally himself with the Revolution. (1) On top of the dissensions brought about by the news from Europe, the leaders had to contend with financial problems. The remainder of the cargo was sold, but as it consisted mostly of trinkets for island trade it did not fetch much, and that little was soon exhausted; it became necessary to borrow from the Dutch, and the departure of the ships became more problematical. D'Auribeau anyhow was in no hurry to leave - he saw little advantage in continuing a journey that might, if reports were true, bring him to the guillotine. In February 1794, he decided to throw in his lot with the émigrés; suspected republicans were arrested during the night, and in the morning the royal flag was raised and saluted by the guns. The expedition was dissolved, some of the prisoners being interned in Batavia, others inland in Java.

Among these prisoners were La Billardière, the two naturalists Ventenat and Riche, the draughtsman Piron, and the three ensigns Willaumez, Laignel and Legrand. La Billardière accused d'Auribeau of having plotted for some time to sell the ships to the Dutch, (2) and to have removed from the scene those who opposed his schemes. There is no reason to believe this: d'Auribeau's move was a purely political one, but it could not have been more ill-timed, for the émigré cause was lost, and the French armies were driving back the Allies. Part of the blame for his decision must lie with the Dutch authorities, who publicised all the excesses of the Terror,

(1) He ends his account with the arrival at Surabaya, saying 'details of later events are foreign to the voyage of rear-admiral Dentrecasteaux and to the aims which the Government had laid down.-' Voyage, vol. I, p. 520. Writing in 1808, he could hardly attack the Dutch, and silence was the best policy. La Billardière, a republican writing in 1801, had no reason to conceal his feelings.

(2) La Billardière, Relation, vol. II, p. 319.

while censoring news of the successes of the French armies, thus giving the impression that the Allies' intervention would soon restore order. The unfortunate commander himself died on 23 August 1794, just as revolutionary delegates from the Ile de France were on their way to ask for 'the traitor Auribeau'. (1)

The Dutch could no longer keep the French against their will, but they retained the two ships as security for their debts. The surviving members of the expedition - for 89 people died out of the original complement of 219 (2) - were allowed to leave for Europe, most of them in March 1795. Even then, sickness dogged them - de Longuerue, an élève in the Recherche, and Girardin, the steward of the same ship, who was a woman in disguise - 'a poor young girl who, betrayed by a disloyal seducer, had fled the righteous anger of her father', as Jurien de la Gravière put it - both died soon after sailing. The ship on which de Rossel was returning home was captured in the Atlantic, and the documents and natural history specimens were taken to England. La Billardière, on the other hand, went to the Ile de France, where he sailed in the Minerve, which was commanded by Laignel, the former ensign from the Espérance who had been arrested with him on d'Auribeau's orders. La Billardière arrived safely in France in March 1796, and at once set about the two-fold task of writing on account of the expedition, and of obtain-

(1) Jurien reports the rumour that d'Auribeau poisoned himself to avoid arrest, Souvenirs d'un Amiral, vol. I, p. 254. This is plausible, but the commander had already been near death the previous year, and Java had caused further havoc among the French

(2) La Billardière, Relation, vol. I, p. XV.

ing the return of his large collection.

'It was not long before I discovered that my natural history collections had been taken to England. The French government at once claimed them; the president of the royal society of London, M. Banks, seconded this request with all the energy that one could expect from his love of the sciences, and a short while later I had the joy, when I received them, to find myself in a position to make known the products of nature I had observed in the various countries at which we had called during our voyage.'(1) La Billardière was fortunate in having an ally of the calibre of Sir Joseph Banks; he was fortunate, too, in that Louis XVIII was not particularly interested in the plants, for the British had asked for the instructions of the émigré government on the disposal of the captured specimens; no definite reply had been received by the time Banks intervened.(2)

The collapse of the expedition under the impact of the Revolution, and the failure to bring back news of La Pérouse, overshadow its real achievements. The true value of the voyage is found reflected in the heavy volumes of de Rossel and of La Billardière, with their disquisitions on natives, plants and currents; in the careful and delicate charts of Beautemps -Beaupré; above all om present-day maps of Australia and of the South West Pacific, where many of the names of the explorers in bays and on

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(1) Ibid., vol. II, pp. 331-2.
(2) See in this connection G. R. de Beer, 'The Relations between Fellows of the Royal Society and French Men of Science when France and Britain were at War', in Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 244-99.

hitherto unknown islands remain as tributes to their courage and determination. It was a natural consequence of the search that d'Entrecasteaux should complete La Pérouse's mission by exploring in detail the area where the voyager had been lost, and whence he had been unable to send reports; thus the examination of the New Caledonian coast, of the Solomons, of the south-west coast of Australia and of Tasmania itself, was completed by the Recherche and the Espérance. La Pérouse, it will be remembered, was to settle whether de Surville's Arsacides were in fact Mendaña's Solomons; the problem was now finally solved:

'The examination we had just carried out of the Arsacides left us no doubt that they were Solomon's archipelago discovered by Mendaña, as citizen Fleurieu had presumed with such good reasons in his excellent work on the discoveries of the French';(1) a tribute which citizen Fleurieu, who had been imprisoned during the Terror and ~~who~~ had barely escaped with his life, was glad to read.

True, d'Entrecasteaux, drawn by the magnet of rumours of French uniforms on the Admiralty Islands, did not enter the Gulf of Carpentaria or explore the north-west coast of Australia, as La Pérouse had intended doing, but the dual nature of the task he had been set necessitated some choice between the alternatives that offered. What was left unfinished on the coast of New Holland was to be completed, a few years later, by another

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(1) La Billardière, Relation, vol. II, p. 271.

Frenchman, Baudin, under equally trying circumstances.

The mystery of the disappearance of La Pérouse remained; France, engaged on the mightiest struggle of her history since the Hundred Years War, could spare nothing more on such a forlorn hope. Public interest in the lost expedition, however, did remain. The account of the voyage, edited by Milet-Mureau, was published in 1797; its publication had been decreed in 1791, but inflation and the lack of public funds had delayed printing until long after the end of the d'Entrecasteaux expedition; the fact that the mystery was still unsolved helped to make it an instant success, and it was translated at once into English and into German, Danish, Dutch and Italian.

Fiction soon took a hand, and an imaginary account of the rescue of Lepante d'Agelet appeared in 1795, coupled with a report of a colony of émigrés living on a Pacific Island (1), while the misadventures of La Pérouse appeared in poetic form and on the stage. (2)

It was evident that traces of the 1788 expedition would only be found by accident; Bass and Flinders, Baudin, Freycinet, Duperrey (3), all these bore in mind the possibility of discovering some clue during their travels, but the eventual solution was provided by an Irishman, Peter Dillon, in 1827. A colourful character and an eccentric, quick of temper and with a vivid vocabulary, Dillon had sailed among the Pacific islands for many years, eventually becoming the owner of a small ship

(1) Découvertes dans la Mer du Sud. Nouvelles de M. de la Peyrouse jusqu'en 1794, Paris, Anon.

(2) e.g. The Desolate Island, a comic opera based on a play by Augustus von Kotzebue and presented at Covent Garden in 1801; La Pérouse, a 'serio-pantomimical drama' performed at the Theatre Royal from July to September 1818; Lapérouse ou le Voyageur autour du Monde by A. Hapdé, presented in Paris, June 1810.

(3) Who passed within ten miles of the true place of the shipwreck in 1823.

the St Patrick. In 1813, while an officer on board the Hunter, he had landed a German, Martin Bushart (1), with his Fijian wife, and a 'Lascar or East Indian sailor', on tiny Tikopia Island in the Santa Cruz group, just south-east of d'Entrecasteaux's Recherche Island. He heard nothing more from them until 1826, when he returned to the island in the St Patrick on his way from Chile to India. All three were alive, but the lascar was seen offering for sale the silver guard of a sword of European manufacture; Dillon, knowing that only the Hunter and two whale-boats had ever been near Tikopia, questioned the seaman who answered that the guard had been obtained from the neighbouring island of Vanikoro, which he himself had visited six years before.

'The natives then informed him that those things which he had seen, with the sword guard, had been brought in their canoes from a distant island, which they called Malicolo, and that two ships, such as the Hunter was, had been wrecked there, when the old men now in Tucopia were boys, and that there yet remained at Mannicolo [sic] large quantities of the wrecks. The lascar confirmed this report and said he had been there about six years back, and that he had seen and conversed with two old men who belonged to the ships...I immediately came to the conclusion that the two ships wrecked must be those under the command of the far-famed and lamented Count de la Perouse,

(1) Presumably Buckhardt. Dillon's account is entitled Narrative and Successful Result of a Voyage in the South Seas performed by order of the Government of British India to ascertain the actual fate of La Perouse's Expedition; a friend of Dillon's, George Bayly, wrote in Sea Life Sixty Years Ago reminiscences which thrown incidental light on Dillon's discovery.

as no other two European ships were lost or missing at so remote a period.' (1)

Dillon sailed without delay for Mannicolo, the correct name of which was Vanikoro, and which was the island d'Entrecasteaux had named Ile de la Recherche. However, contrary winds and the poor condition of his ship prevented him from landing, and he thought it wiser to sail for Calcutta, where, on arrival, he informed the British authorities of his discovery. In a letter to Lushington, the Chief Secretary of the Bengal administration, Dillon expressed the hope that the two men might be still alive and might be brought back to civilisation. (2)

The British were sufficiently impressed by the evidence brought back to agree to an expedition leaving without delay for Vanikoro under Dillon's command; his own St Patrick not being considered equal to the journey, another ship, named the Research, was provided.

Dillon sailed on 27 January 1827, and with him went another eccentric, Dr Tytler, who later attempted to wrest the command from Dillon on the grounds that the Irishman was of unsound mind, and ended by having Dillon sentenced to two months' imprisonment in Hobart - an imbroglio from which the furious captain extricated himself only after a great deal of trouble. Another passenger was Eugene Chaigneau, who represented the French Government. Chaigneau was the nephew of an equally colourful personage, Jean Baptiste Chaigneau, who had spent thirty years as adviser to the Court of Cochin-China until expelled by a xenophobic emperor. Chaigneau

(1) Dillon, Narrative, vol. I, pp. 33-4.
(2) Letter of 19 September 1826, quoted in Dillon, Narrative, vol. 1. pp. 37-44.

the younger had been officially accredited to the Court at Hué by the French, but his credentials had been rejected by the Indo-Chinese, who wanted no further entanglements with foreign powers.(1) At the time when Dillon was preparing to leave Calcutta, Chaigneau was in India, uncertain whether to await a change in the political climate of Hué or to return to France and admit failure; he was therefore delighted at the opportunity of accompanying the Irishman on what promised to be a mission of importance.

After leaving Tytler in Tasmania, whence he sailed on 20 May, Dillon went to Port Jackson and then to New Zealand, where he remained from 1 to 24 July, obtaining water and wood for the next stage of the journey. His next call was Tongatapu, where he enquired, through an interpreter - an Englishman who had lived on the island for over twenty years - whether La Pérouse had called at Tonga. 'They stated that, after Captain Cook's departure, and before the arrival of the two ships last-mentioned [d'Entrecasteaux's], two other large ships had arrived at the island of Namooka, or Rotterdam, but did not anchor: they stood off and on, having boats on shore trading.'(2) This tied up with the report that La Pérouse had given of trade with natives from the islands of western Tonga, while he was on his way to Botany Bay, but it was not really evidence that he had returned there later; it was a point that was of interest only because it

(1) See C.P.T. Laplace, Voyage autour du Monde par les Mers de l'Inde et de la Chine, Instructions dated 15 December 1829, vol. I, pp. xii/xiii; also John F. Cody, The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia, pp. 12-16.

(2) Dillon, Narrative, vol. I, p. 287.

would have provided a clue to whether La Pérouse had sailed south of New Caledonia, or whether he had sailed along the west coast; there seems little doubt that he had sailed north-east from Port Jackson to New Caledonia, then along the western reef just as d'Entrecasteaux had done, and again north-east to the Santa Cruz group. This is confirmed by the report, garbled and not clearly understood, that natives of New Caledonia had seen two ships on the west coast before the arrival of d'Entrecasteaux.

From Tongatapu, Dillon went to Rotuma, and to Tikopia, where he arrived on 5 September. His meeting with a native whom he calls Rathea helped him to obtain the clearest account so far of what had happened on Vanikoro.

'His name was Rathea, and he had been at Mannicolo for about five years, and by all accounts spoke that language with fluency. From him I gleaned the following particulars relative to the ships which were wrecked there when he was a boy of about eight or ten years of age. From the natives he learned that the two ships alluded to in this narrative ran on shore in the night on reefs some considerable distance from the land. The one which got on shore near to Whannow was totally lost, and such of the crew as escaped to land were murdered by the islanders. Their skulls were offered to the deity in a temple where they remained many years, and were seen by many Tucopians. The narrator did not see the skulls himself, but believed they were now mouldered away. The ship which had been wrecked at Paiow, after being on the reef, was driven into a good situation. The crew of these

ships consisted of several hundred men. The ship stranded at Paiow was broken up to build a two-masted ship. The people, while employed building the two-masted ship, had a fence built round her of wooden palisading, within which they lived. There were several of the islanders friendly disposed towards them: others were very hostile, and kept up a continual war with the shipwrecked people. When the new vessel was built, all but two men embarked in her, and sailed away for their native country, after which they never returned.' (1)

In Tikopia, he was able to buy more European relics - four bells, two small church bells, half a brass globe, and a silver sword handle. On 8 September, he reached Vanikoro, the scene of the disaster; he purchased more relics - a ship's bell, part of the stern of a ship marked with a fleur de lys, and guns with the maker's identification marks still visible. The sea itself soon revealed its secrets when more guns were found in the shallow waters of the reef, indicating the place where one of the ships had foundered. Dillon spent exactly one month on Vanikoro, sailing on 8 October for New Zealand. He had sickness on board and - although the local English missionaries were unwilling to help the rough Roman Catholic seaman - the stay restored his men for the return journey to India. He went on to France, taking the relics with him, which the ageing de Lesseps tearfully identified, and the grateful French government bestowed on him the knighthood of the Légion d'Honneur, and an annuity of 4,000 francs. Now a firm ally of France and something of a celebrity, he invited the French to establish missions and settlements in the Pacific through his influence. 'At present, I can obtain for France,

(1) Dillon, Narrative, vol.11, p.120.

through the influence I have acquired, the free gifts of the richest countries that are under the heavens; later, they would cost rivers of blood and enormous sums.' (1)

Meanwhile, the French explorer Dumont d'Urville had also gone to Vanikoro. When he had set out on the Astrolabe in 1826, he had been instructed, as were most navigators of the time, to keep in mind the possibility of finding a clue to the disappearance of La Pérouse. 'Your voyage will also be of interest if you succeed in discovering traces of La Pérouse and of his companions,' stated his instructions. (2) There was, however, very little information of any value at the time, and Dumont d'Urville's attempt to verify some current rumours brought nothing new to light, and left him pessimistic. (3)

It was in December 1827, at Hobart, that he learned for the first time of Dillon's discovery and of the voyage of the Research. (4) The local authorities were scornful of Dillon, who had made such a bad impression; 'Franckland, an aide-de-camp to the governor' (George Frankland, who was later Surveyor-General of Tasmania) had replied to his enquiries that Dillon 'was mad, an adventurer, and that his pretended discovery was a fable.' D'Urville nevertheless read Dillon's report, and found in it such a tone of sincerity that he decided to alter his plans, and to make at once for Vanikoro. He sailed from Hobart on 6 January 1828, and was at the scene of the shipwreck by 22 February.

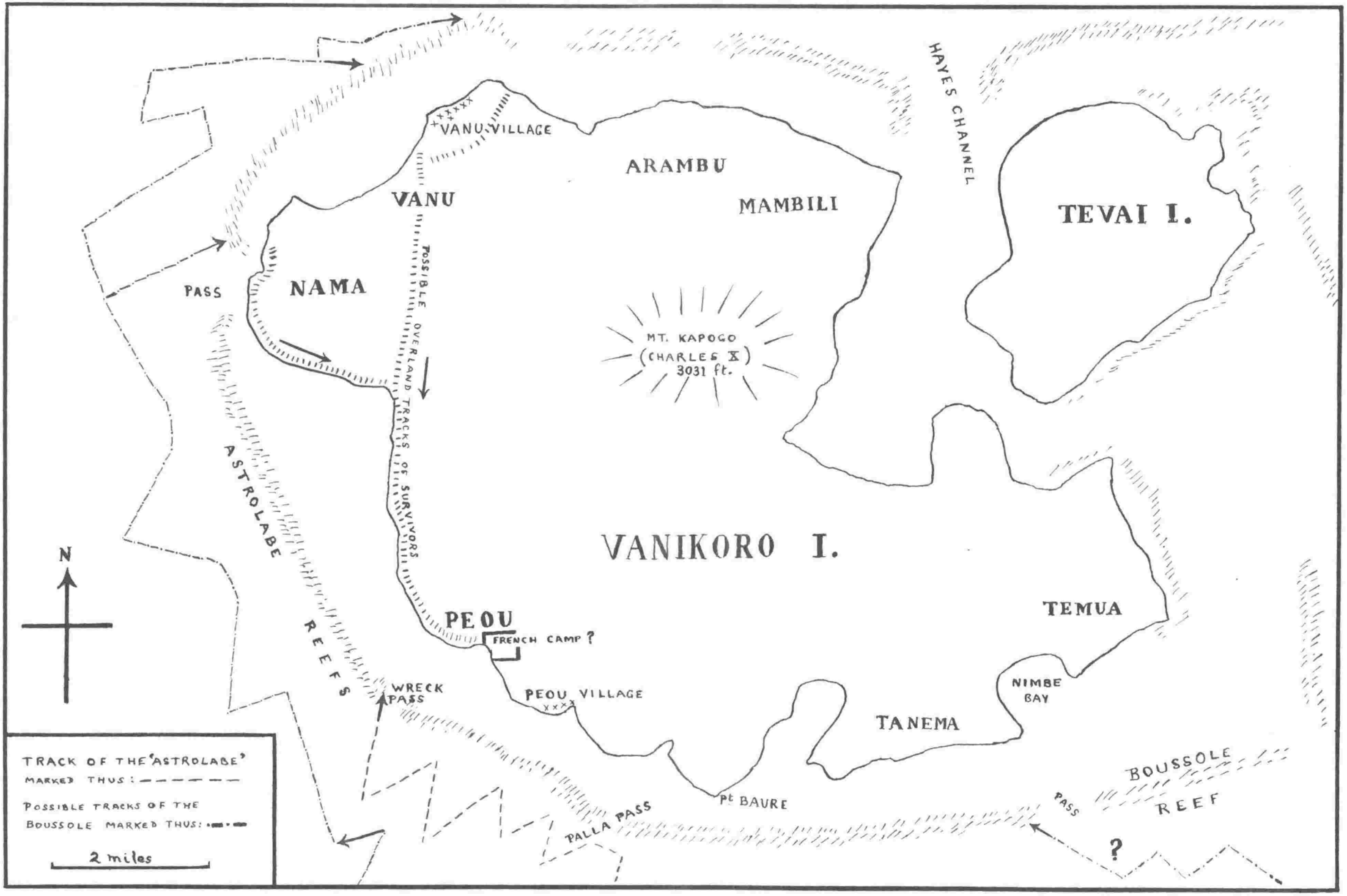
He remained there until 17 March, during which time he

(1) Mémoire to the Prefect of Bourbon, 7 September 1829, MS in in Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; and copy in Turnbull Library, Wellington.
(2) Voyage de la Corvette l'Astrolabe, vol. 1, p. liii.
(3) Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 5-6.
(4) Ibid., vol. V, pp. 8-10.

questioned the natives, recovered an anchor weighing 1800 lbs, a bronze swivel-gun and a copper blunderbuss, both with their serial numbers still visible, as well as sundry other metal objects. He also erected a memorial to La Pérouse in New Zealand kauri.(1)

Reconstructing the events of 1788 was not so simple; there were no survivors on the island, and the natives, who had killed some of the French as they reached the shore, were afraid of reprisals and unwilling to talk. Even if Dillon and Dumont d'Urville had succeeded in fully loosening their tongues, they would not have been able to tell the whole story, for it seems clear that the ships had struck at different times, and at some distance from each other. What information Dumont d'Urville was able to obtain broadly confirmed this. An elderly native 'declared that the first ship was seen grounded on the reef at Tanema, after a night when the wind had been very strong, and the following morning they saw the other grounded in front of Peou. Nothing was saved out of the first vessel, but about thirty men escaped, who joined forty or fifty others from the other ship off Peou; there they built a small boat in which they all sailed away after six or seven moons. The old man had seen the ship grounded at Tanema, and the men who had come off her, but he had not seen those from the ship grounded off Peou, because his tribe was at war with the one in the other district.' (2) The only difference relates to the place where the first ship had struck: the name given was Tanema, which may have been intended to be Nama, a

(1) Ibid., vol. V, pp. 199-200. Many visits to Vanikoro have been made since; the latest - in 1958 and 1959 - found anchors, cannon and a Russian coin dated 1724, near Peou.
(2) Ibid., vol. V, pp. 191-2.


VANU VILLAGE
ARAMBU
MAMBILI
HAYES CHANNEL
TEVAI I.
VANU
NAMA
PASS
POSSIBLE OVERLAND TRACKS OF SURVIVORS
MT. KAPOGO
(CHARLES X)
3031 ft.
ASTROLABE
REEFS
VANIKORO I.
N
PEOU
FRENCH CAMP ?
TEMUA
WRECK PASS
PEOU VILLAGE
NIMBE BAY
TANEMA
BOUSSOLE REEF
PASS
Pt BAURE
PALLA PASS
?
TRACK OF THE 'ASTROLABE' MARKED THUS:
POSSIBLE TRACKS OF THE BOUSSOLE MARKED THUS:
2 miles

№ 13

district adjacent to Vanu - in which case the evidence given to both enquiries would broadly agree.

Given the language difficulty, the natives' general reluctance to discuss some of the events, and the fact that forty years had gone by, one can hardly expect a conclusive explanation, but by using the reports of Peter Dillon, of Dumont d'Urville, and of later visitors to Vanikoro, it has been possible to obtain a clearer picture of the 1788 shipwreck.

The two ships were off the island when they were struck by a hurricane; the Boussole sank near the village of Vanu on the north-east coast; those who managed to escape from the wreck and swim or drift to land were either killed by the natives or managed to hide and later make their way to Peou. The Astrolabe sailed too close to the submerged reef, and struck it at Peou, a few miles further south; in an attempt to lighten the ship - which had not sunk, but had remained fast - the guns were thrown overboard, but the ship, hard caught in the coral, could not float off; the French, when they realised this, ferried supplies to the beach, either in the ship's boats or on rafts. They thus landed in good order, and were able to resist the attacks of hostile natives. Within a year, they completed the construction of a small vessel, in which all the survivors - with the possible exception of two - sailed away.

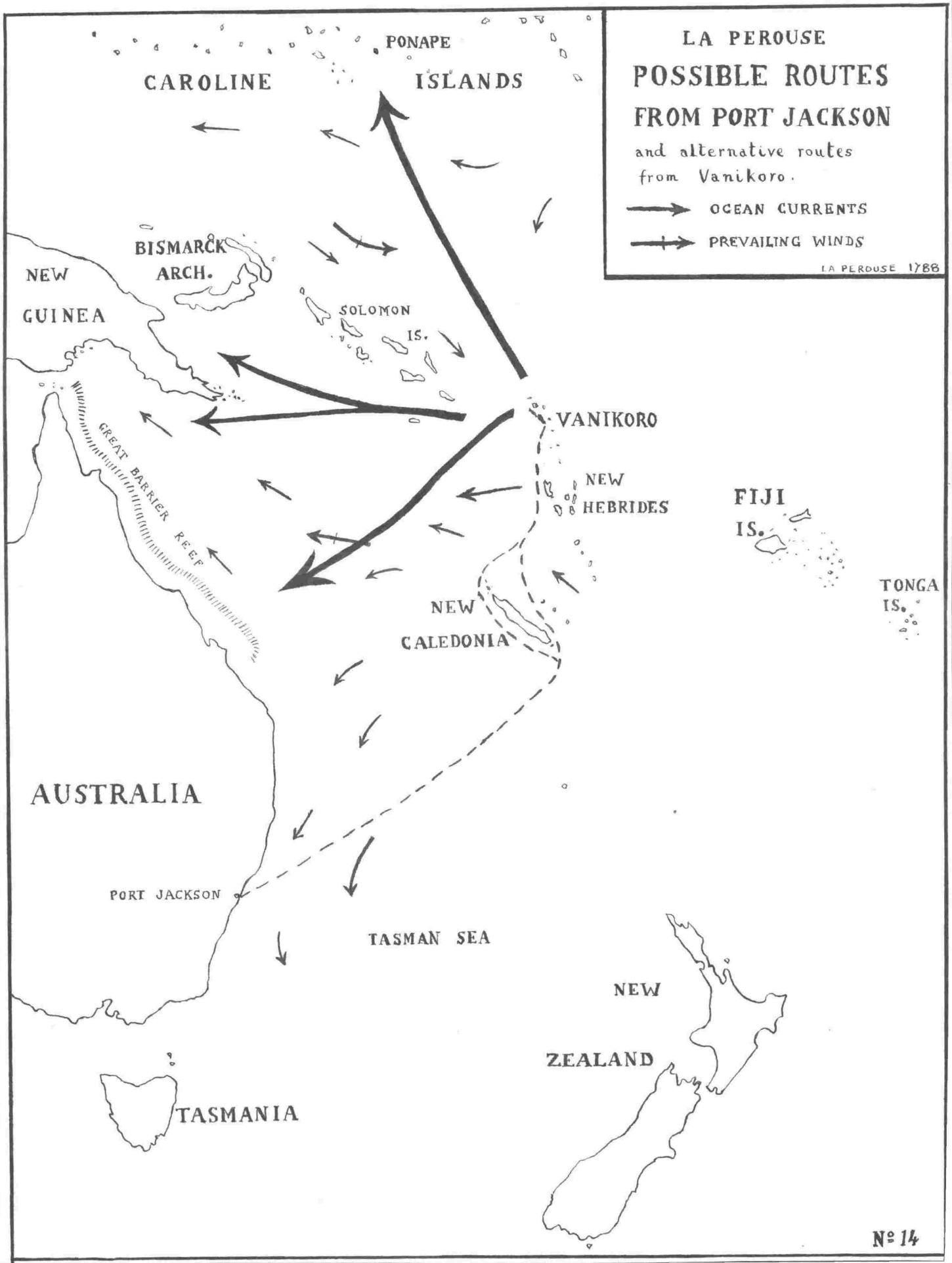
There are still obscure points. Did some men really escape from the Boussole to join the others at Peou, as the old native had told Dumont d'Urville? There is a shred of confirmation for this in the evidence of Captain Benier, of the Bruat, who when that ship called at Vanikoro in 1883 was told that the leader of

the men who sailed away in the small boat was called 'Pilo' (1), a name that has been taken for a native version of La Pérouse. If this is true, then La Pérouse and, presumably, others from the Boussole did escape the islanders' attacks at Vanu - but nearly a century had gone by when Benier arrived, and the name may have been that of another Frenchman, such as Jean Guillou who was surgeon on board the Astrolabe, and who may have been remembered for some services rendered to the islanders.

The question of the two men who did not sail in the makeshift boat remains unanswered. They may well have been alive in 1820, when the lascar claimed to have been in Vanikoro, but this again may be a misunderstanding, and we remain confronted with the statement, made to Dumont d'Urville, that all sailed away. It is unfortunate that, if the French had left an inscription somewhere on the island before they left, it did not survive the action of time or the interference of the islanders.

The final question is the route followed by the makeshift boat. There were three possibilities: to the Dutch East Indies, to the Philippines or Guam, or back to New South Wales. The first route meant a slow and tortuous navigation through the formidable dangers of Torres Strait, or an equally dangerous navigation past the reefs of the Louisiades and along the coast of New Guinea, or again close to the inhospitable shores of the Solomons; the route to the Philippines was less dangerous, but entailed a voyage of 2500 miles through the open sea to the north of the Solomons; the third presented the formidable danger of the Great Barrier

(1) Fleuriot de Langle, La Tragique Expédition, pp. 226-8.


LA PEROUSE
POSSIBLE ROUTES
FROM PORT JACKSON
and alternative routes
from Vanikoro.
OCEAN CURRENTS
PREVAILING WINDS
LA PEROUSE 1788
PONAPE
CAROLINE
ISLANDS
BISMARCK
ARCH.
NEW
GUINEA
SOLOMON
IS.
VANIKORO
GREAT BARRIER REEF
NEW
HEBRIDES
FIJI
IS.
TONGA
IS.
NEW
CALEDONIA
AUSTRALIA
PORT JACKSON
TASMAN SEA
NEW
ZEALAND
TASMANIA
Nº 14

Reef towards which both winds and current would inexorably drive the frail craft. It may have been lost along any one of these routes, if a sudden tropical storm did not overwhelm it on the way. There is only one slight clue. In 1840, the French corvette, Danaïde, visiting Ponape in the eastern Carolines, learned that, some fifty years earlier, a small boat with white men aboard had landed nearby, the men being killed by the natives. (1)

Although such evidence is unreliable, it may well have been there that was written the final chapter of the La Pérouse expedition.

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(1) G. Froment-Guiyesse, La Pérouse, p. 154n.

- 7 -

ADVENTURES IN THE FUR TRADE.

La Pérouse had reported on the profitable fur trade that could be carried out along the north-east coast of the Pacific, a no man's land where Russian, British and Spanish interests were beginning to compete, but even as France's interest was being awakened, British traders were sailing to forestall any attempt by merchants from across the Channel. James Cook, whose pioneering work in all corners of the Pacific at once sharpened and impeded the ambitions of French discoverers, was the first on the coast, and his officers found that, in Macao, skins sold readily, and at prices that increased day by day as the Chinese merchants bid for the British supplies. (1) La Pérouse, although this was not stressed in the official accounts of the voyage, was to enquire into the possibility of French trade in the parts he visited, and to test the validity of Cook's reports on behalf of French commercial interests. Meanwhile, however, the British had sent various ships to the sealskin coast - Bolts in 1781 just failed, James Hanna in 1785 succeeded with a tiny ship of 60 tons and a complement of thirty men, sailing from Canton river.

Also during 1785, the King George's Sound Company was founded in London by Richard Etches and several associates, who despatched in September the King George, of 320 tons, and the Queen Charlotte, of 200 tons, under Captains Portlock and Dixon. Hanna returned to the coast in 1786 with the Sea Otter, a larger ship than he had used the previous year and, again, he sailed from Macao. The Captain Cook and the Experiment, under Captains Lowrie and Guise, arrived at Nootka Sound in June. Captain Peters, who left China

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(1) Cook and King 'A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean, vol. III, p. 437.

in July on the Lark, was lost on Copper Island, near Bering Island. 1786, a year of intense activity in the north-east Pacific, saw the departure of Barclay in the Imperial Eagle from Ostend, of Colnett in the Price of Wales, and of Duncan in the Princess Royal. During this same period, merchants from Calcutta, and others from American ports, were sending ships to reap what they could out of the profitable trade.

There is little direct evidence of French interest in the fur trade until 1788, when Captain Portlock, on his way home, met a French captain, Etienne Marchand, at St Helena. Portlock gave the Frenchman 'important details concerning trade on the northwest of America, and on the advantages of combining the fur trade with a port of call in China, where there was a definite market for these goods, and where a return cargo was assured.' (1) Marchand, who was born in Grenada in the West Indies, in 1755, when the island was still French, was a captain in the merchant navy, and engaged in trade with the East. At the time of his meeting with Portlock, he was on his way back from Bengal, (2) and presumably looking for some profitable undertaking; he saw in the fur trade a promise of high profits, and as soon as he reached Marseilles, probably in August 1789, (3) he persuaded the firm of J. & D. Baux, wealthy local merchants, to finance an expedition to the Pacific. The possibilities offering in the fur trade were not unknown in France, but Marchand was able to confirm from first-hand information the rumours then circulating among the French and the reports that had been coming in from French commercial agents in Macao, India, the United States and London.

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(1) P. Levot, Nouvelle Biographie Générale, vol. 33, article Marchand, pp. 474-5.
(2) Fleurieu, Voyage ... d'Etienne Marchand, vol. I. p. CLXXXV.
(3) Portlock reached England at the end of August 1788, and presumably Marchand arrived at Marseilles at about the same time.

Baux's realised that the market would not remain advantageous for long, and that it was important to waste no time.

A ship of 300 tons, the Solide, was built.(1) It was sheathed with copper, provisioned for a voyage of three to four years, and carried four complete new sets of ropes and sails. (2) Shipowners have often been accused of skimping and saving when despatching merchant vessels; no such accusation can be levelled against the house of Baux, for not only was the voyage speedy and without accident, but no deaths were recorded from any of the diseases so common among eighteenth-century sailors.

The Solide had a total complement of fifty men, including five officers, (3) two surgeons and three volontaires. The plan was to sail with all possible speed to the North West Coast, there to obtain a first shipment of furs, and to sail across the Pacific to China, where the furs would be sold. The proceeds would enable Marchand to buy more furs on the Coast, so that the same procedure could be repeated. In all, it was hoped to go back twice to the Coast and, on the occasion of his third visit to Canton, Marchant was to buy tea, silk and other goods of Chinese origin, which he would bring back to France.

Marchand was ready to leave by June 1790, but the expedition did not in fact sail until 14 December of that year. The delay was the result of the 'Nootka incident', a diplomatic wrangle which nearly led to war between the main powers.

Although there was no Spanish settlement along what is now the coast of British Columbia, Spain laid claim to the entire coastline up to Alaska's borders and even beyond. It was a pretension based on dubious Spanish discoveries and later Spanish exploration strengthened by the Spanish policy of

(1) 'The firm of Baux saw, without delay ... to the construction of a ship of 300 tons.' Fleurieu, Voyage ... d'Etienne Marchand, vo. I, p. clxxxvi.
(2) Fleurieu, Voyage ... d'Etienne Marchand, vol.II, p. 519.
(3) Two of the officers, Chanal and Masse, were seconds-in-command, and listed as captains.

exclusiveness - a policy comparatively easy to maintain when Pacific voyages were a rarity, but far more difficult when the ocean became a mere seaway. Ownership by right of prior discovery is rarely recognised when not backed by actual occupation, and the Spanish claim, which was at best extremely tenuous, was disregarded by the other seafaring nations. In order to assert her rights, and to forestall expected British and Russian settlements, Spain decided to occupy the focal point of the fur trade - Nootka Sound, or El Puerto de San Lorenzo.

In March 1789, Don Manuel Antonio Florez, Viceroy of Peru, despatched the Princess and the Querida to Nootka, where the Spanish found two American ships and one Portuguese, which they did not molest, but a fourth vessel - a British one - was seized. A fort was erected, and the necessary steps taken to maintain the outpost; this action was timely, for another British ship appeared shortly after, loaded with supplies and materials for what was to be a British settlement; it was confiscated, as were two others that came later.

The British, however, were in no mood to recognise Spanish sovereignty over a territory that was commercially profitable, and that would in time logically link up with eastern Canada. The crisis which derived from the Nootka incident led the two nations to the brink of war. Baux's therefore waited cautiously for news before allowing Marchand to sail, and it was not until they were certain that war had been averted - by diplomatic arrangements that amounted to a Spanish defeat - that Marchand left Marseilles.

The Solide passed through the Straits of Gibraltar on 29 December 1790; (1) Tenerife was sighted on 7 January, and the Cape Verde Islands

(1) There are two main accounts of the voyage. Fleurieu's Voyage autour du Monde pendant les années 1790, 1791, et 1792 par Etienne Marchand, published in 1798, and based on the journal of Prosper Chanal who was Marchand's second-in-command, and Découverte des Iles de la Révolution, by Marchand himself, which, in turn, is the basis of a book by G. Saint Yves, Le Voyage autour du monde du Capt. E. Marchand, (Paris, 1897).

a week later. Marchand stayed three days at the island of Sao Thiago (or St Jago), from 15 to 18 January 1791; it was the last call he was to make until mid-June - and for more than ten thousand miles. The long passage was intentional: 'Captain Marchand's intention had been at the beginning to sail direct, and without any call, from Cape Verde Islands to the north-west coast of America, and the health of the crew, which was equal to their goodwill, and which the hardships they had undergone during the navigation around the southern lands of America, and around Cape Horn, had not affected, would have allowed the execution of the plan he had made, namely, to complete in one stretch, and without making for any land, a passage of approximately four thousand leagues.' (1)

There were various reasons for this; Fleurieu advanced two: it would save money, as long as the health of the crew were not impaired as a result of the long navigation, and it would be a remarkable achievement. We could add other, more likely, motives: it was becoming urgent to get to the coast as quickly as possible, to make up for the time already wasted on account of the Nootka incident; in addition, beyond Rio de Janeiro, the only ports of call were Spanish ones - and it might be wise to avoid them so soon after the failure of the efforts of the Spanish to close the North West Coast, for the Solide, even if not held or impounded in a Spanish colonial port, might nevertheless be delayed by an unfriendly local governor.

The problem of water, however, foiled Marchand's plans. Even so, he judged it wise to avoid a Spanish port; instead he made for the Marquesas Islands. (2) It was not easy to make a satisfactory landfall in this small island group, nearly four thousand miles from South America. Marchand had no chronometer, but he and Chanal took lunar observations, and the average between the two readings was taken as the ship's correct position. (3) It cannot be denied that the result was remarkably accurate, and Fleurieu rightly gives credit to Marchand for his navigational ability.

(1) Fleurieu, Voyage, vol. I, p. 30.
(2) Ibid., vol. I. p. 32,
(3) Ibid., vol. I. p. cxciii.

'It will no doubt be encouraging to navigators to mention briefly here ... the precision with which captain Marchand, following his observations and those of captain Chanal, made a landfall on Mendoça's islands, after a passage of seventy-three days since sighting Cape San Juan in Staten Land, without having seen any other land, and guiding his ship only by the constant use of astronomic observations, in the middle of a Sea where Currents act in directions and with an effect which are disconcerting, and which render useless every measure, every calculation, all the ordinary methods of Pilotage.' (1)

On 12 June 1791, the island of Madalena (Fatu Hiva) was sighted; two days later the Solide anchored in Madre de Dios Bay, in Santa Christina (Tahuata).

The Marquesas Islands were among the earliest discoveries made in the Pacific; they had been visited by Cook, as well as by Mendaña, so that Marchand, although interested in the people and their land, saw no reason to remain there more than the few days necessary for the replenishing of the water casks. There was, however, a great deal of trading, and the Marquesans proved to be clever thieves; but there were no serious incidents. On the contrary, Marchand was received with great ceremonial.

'The strangers were invited to sit beneath a big tree whose foliage shaded the enclosure, and protected them from the heat of the sun; the natives then presented to them a man, small in stature, of very advanced age, to whom they gave the title of Othoouh, which was taken to mean king or chief ... (2) Captain Marchand offered him some gifts which he accepted.' (3)

It is not surprising that, when the French prepared to leave, on the evening of 20 June, the Marquesans, especially the girls,

(1) Ibid., vol. I, pp. 39-40.
(2) This was probably a priest, or tahua; see Dr. Clavel, Les Marquisiens, p. 45; L. Rollin, Les Iles Marquises, p. 79. The ceremony no doubt took place in one of the shaded public places called 'Tohua'; Rollin, op. cit., p. 81.
(3) Fleurieu, Voyage ... d'Etienne Marchand, vol. I, p. 55.

expressed their sorrow with lamentations and tears. 'May they never have one day to reproach themselves for having loved the French too much.' (1) The unfortunate people were soon to have cause to regret having even seen Europeans, let alone loved some, for as a result of disease and social evils, (2) their numbers were to fall from an estimated sixteen thousand in Marchand's day to less than three thousand in 1946 - a dramatic fall which has only recently shown signs of being stopped by the remedial measures adopted by the French authorities.

When Marchand sailed again, he set out to investigate the possibility of land lying to the northwest of Tahuata. 'On the day when the Solide had anchored in the Bay, on 14 June, as the sun was setting, the weather being very clear, they [the French] noticed on the horizon a fixed patch which had the appearance of the summit of a high peak, and which lay, from the bay, west by northwest... the next day at the same hour, the horizon being equally free from mist, and the atmosphere being perfectly translucent, they saw the same spot in the same direction as on the previous day. It was not possible to doubt that this patch was land; and since no chart shows any for this area, ~~that~~ no traveller makes any mention of it, it could only be an unknown land, and it was decided to examine it,' (3) Marchand therefore sailed northwest, and sighted land at dawn on 21 June: it

of this new discovery. A suitable bay - Hakahetau - soon appeared, and Marchant landed. He took possession of the island in the name of France - 'in the name of His Majesty Louis XVI, king of the French,' says his biographer St Yves, writing in 1897; (1) 'in the name of the French Nation,' says Marchand himself, writing in 1792, a month after the abolition of the monarchy. (2) Whichever form may have been used, Marchand took unusual precautions to preserve the documents. Burial or inscriptions on a plaque were unsatisfactory because the natives could not be trusted to respect the memorials; instead, three copies were made, and one inserted in each of three sealed bottles. The bottles were then, with great ceremony, entrusted to three different people - one to an elder of the tribe, one to a warrior, one to a girl - representing three generations. The hope was that the natives would treat the gifts with respect derived from superstitious awe. 'They remained convinced that a conquest by bottles is safe against all events.' (3) That the Marquesas Islands have become part of the French colonial empire is, however, purely coincidental, for not only have such documents little value in themselves, but, as we shall see, Marchand was not really the first discoverer.

This visit was completed by 4 p.m. The Solide remained off Ua Pu until the morning, when the French proceeded to another island, Nukuhiva, which they named Ile Baux. 'We did not get near enough to it to find out whether it is inhabited.' (4) There is, apparently, a local tradition that Marchand had landed here, and left a mention of his visit on a rock which, though damaged, was still in existence as late as 1927, (5), but there is no confirmation of this either in Fleurieu's book nor in Marchand's pamphlet.

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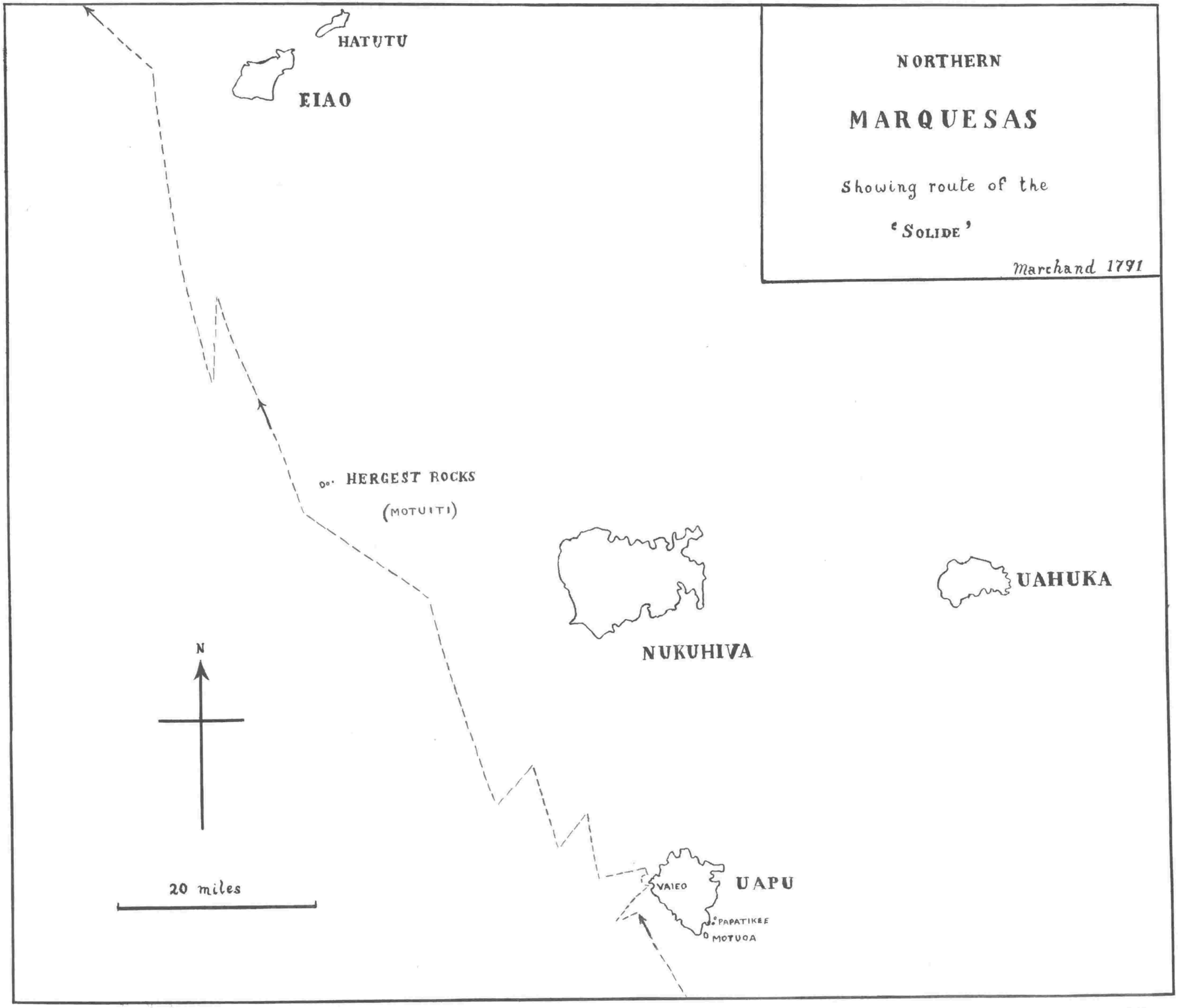
(1) St. Yves, Voyage autour du monde, p. 23.
(2) Marchand, Découverte des Iles de la Révolution, p. 15.
(3) Fleurieu, op. cit., p. 245.
(4) Ibid., vol. I, p. 252. Marchand, Découverte des Iles de la Révolution, pp. 21-2.
(5) L. Rollin, Les Iles Marquises, pp. 227-8.


NORTHERN
MARQUESAS
Showing route of the
'SOLIDE'
Marchand 1791
HATUTU
EIAO
HERGEST ROCKS
(MOTUITI)
NUKUHIVA
UAHUKA
N
20 miles
VAIEO
UAPU
PAPATIKEE
MOTUOA

Nº 19

During the afternoon of that same day, 23 June, the French saw cloud formations to the WSW, which they believed to be some undiscovered island (1); soon after they discovered land to the NE: on the morning of the 24th, this was seen to be two islands - Masse and Chanal, or Eiao and Hatutu. As well as these, Les Deux Frères - Motu Iti - and the Ile Plate - an islet off shore from Ua Pu - were sighted, making a total of six. Because Marchand sailed at night from Ua Pu, and because he kept to a north-westerly course, he missed a seventh island - Ua Huka which lies somewhat to the east. The whole group Marchand named Iles de la Révolution.

Although he did not know it, Marchand had been preceded by an American, Joseph Ingraham, who in the Hope, a vessel from Boston, had discovered seven islands in this group in April, 1791 - just two months earlier - thus robbing Marchand of the honour of first discovery. Ingraham did not, however, call at any of these islands, contenting himself with sailing through and naming them. (2) Of the seven islands reported to have been discovered by Ingraham, five were those seen by Marchand - Ua Pu, Nukuhiva, Eiao, Hatutu and Motu Oa; the sixth was Ua Huku, which as we have pointed out, Marchand did not see. The seventh could not be Motu Iti - Marchand's Deux Frères - because Ingraham described it as being about the size of Ua Huku, but higher, with high peaks shaped like pyramids. Such a description fits Nukuhiva, the northern coast of which is backed by a line of high peaks, rising in one case to 3890 feet. 'Ingraham, having seen the south part of Nukuhiva the previous afternoon at a long distance, did not realise that his Federal Island and Franklin's Island were the south and north aspects of the same large island. That night Ingraham came north without seeing Motu Iti ... which consists of three islets, all of which bears no resemblance to Ingraham's detail of Franklin's Island.' (3)

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(1) Fleurieu, op. cit., vol. I, p. 255.

(2) 'An account of a recent discovery of seven Islands in the South Pacific Ocean by Joseph Ingraham, citizen of Boston, and commander of the brigantine Hope of 70 tons' ... in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, for the year 1793, pp.20-4.

(3) C.A. Sharp, The Discovery of the Pacific Islands, p. 167.

Thus Marchand can get the credit for the first discovery of Les Deux Frères, which are not two, but three. And one might also add the small island of Motu Takahe, off Ua Pu, which Marchand named Le Pic or l'Obélisque, for it is possible that Ingraham did not list it among his discoveries because he had not noticed it, and not because it was too small to warrant a mention.

When Fleurieu was compiling his account of Marchand's voyage, the transactions of the Massachusetts Historical Society for 1793 had not yet come to his notice - although he knew of a voyage to the Marquesas by some American, since Chanal, whose journal he was using as authority, mentions meeting Ingraham subsequently in China. However, as if to complicate the situation yet further, in March 1792, an Englishman, Lieutenant Hergest, in the Daedalus, landed at Santa Christina, and then proceeded to rediscover the Isles de la Révolution, to which he too gave suitable names. In 1794, the English geographer, Aaron Arrowsmith, published his 'Planisphere', in which Hergest's discoveries were included; it was not a time when communications with England were easy or satisfactory, and Fleurieu took the English names to be those given by Ingraham. He was struggling with an archipelago in which nearly every island had no fewer than four names, if one includes the native ones. (1) It was not until 1798, when his book had been partially printed, that the old geographer learned the truth, and saw the pieces of the puzzle fall into place. (2)

To Marchand, unaware of Ingraham's voyage, the discovery was a good omen, and a natural cause of national pride. 'When I arrived in these islands, I raised the tricolour flag, congratulating myself on being the first navigator who was able to carry over this immense ocean this new standard, symbol of the Liberty which we had just conquered.' (3)

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(1) See his discussion of the problem in his Voyage, vo. II, pp. 378-81.
(2) An addendum appears later in the third volume on pp. 421-2. An account of the voyage of the Daedalus, and a mention of an American voyage to the Marquesas appeared in Vancouver's A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and round the World, vol. II, ch. IV, pp. 79-98, which was published in 1798.
(3) Marchand, Découvertes des Iles de la Révolution, p. 26.

The Solide sailed away, in a northerly direction, on 24 June 1791, 'having taught the natives to shout 'Vive la Nation'.' On 7 August, Marchand had reached Cape del Engaño, not far from La Pérouse's Port des Français; soon after, trading began in what Fleurieu believed was Norfolk Bay, in Pitt Island, but ~~which~~ was probably Sitka, or one of the other sounds on the Western Coast of Baranof Islands. (1)

The French traders found that the natives were now far less gullible, and far more aware of real values - with the result that prices were much higher than had been anticipated. They were thus forced to leave after less than a fortnight, regretting their lost opportunities, as also the vermin which came out of the skins, and fed happily on the crew. (2) They sailed down the west coast of Queen Charlotte Islands, examining harbours in the hopes of finding more natives willing to trade. Off Barkley Sound, they saw a ship leaving and making for the south; Marchand realised that following the track of another trader was a complete waste of time; it was much wiser to make at once for China, and sell what he had, before the arrival of the other ships caused a glut on the market. This, after all, according to the plan of the voyage, was only the first trip to the coast: there were to be two more.

The Solide left the North West Coast on 8 September 1791. Early in October she was in Hawaii where, without landing, Marchand obtained supplies of food. He continued mostly between the 12th and 15th parallels sailing through the northern Mariannas, veering west-north-west to the Bashi Channel, and turning south to Macao, where he arrived on 27 November. There he learned of a newly-promulgated decree forbidding the entry of any skins into southern China.

Baux's agents at Canton confirmed the impossibility of getting round this prohibition without running considerable risks and the danger of confiscation, since the ships were being watched day and night.

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(1) Marchand's position is given as 57'N and 135° 39'W. Sitka is in 57° 10'N. and 135° 30' W.

(2) 'When you load a shipment of furs, you take on a shipment of lice.' - Marchand, op. cit., p. 28.

Marchand sent home a report of his journey, together with a map of the Isles of the Revolution, which was duly received and registered by the National Assembly on 17 April 1702. (1) It was here too that Chanal met Ingraham, who was ill, and whom Roblet, the Solide's surgeon, attended.

Marchand was not a man to waste time on useless missions (2), and he stayed only nine days in Macao - just long enough to assure himself that there was no likelihood of selling his cargo satisfactorily in China, and to get a few necessary stores on board. He was a very efficient man, a good sailor, and his ship was of the same sterling quality; he sailed from China on 6 December 1791, and on 30 January 1792 he anchored at the Ile de France, where the shock wave of the Revolution was causing anxiety and social unrest; on 18 April, he sailed for France, and on 14 August 1792 he arrived at Toulon. The entire voyage had lasted only twenty months - it was one of the quickest circumnavigations of the eighteenth century. (3) During that time only one man had died, and that was of a stroke. As Fleurieu states, 'under normal conditions, more than one member of society out of fifty dies in the space of twenty months, assuming those fifty to be thirty years of age, which is the average age of a ship's crew.' (4)

Marchand's determination had enabled him to return safely a few months before England's entry into the war. There still remained the matter of the furs brought back from the North West coast; Baux's were not overly perturbed at Marchand's failure for, although their grandiose dreams had collapsed, it was still possible to get a good price for the skins, which the war would make rather scarce. The cargo was therefore sent to Lyons for sale, but the counter-revolutionary movement that swept through southern France in 1793, and ~~which~~ led

(1) Fleurieu, Voyage ... d'Etienne Marchand, vol. II, p. 376.
(2) He never wasted time. His book was published and on the bookstalls within three months of his arrival in France.
(3) It is interesting that Fleurieu, impressed by Marchand's voyage and the possibilities it offered for the future, also advocated the cutting of a canal across the Central American isthmus, and another between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, so as to speed shipping even more.
(4) Fleurieu, Voyage ... d'Etienne Marchand, vol. II, pp. 509-12.

to the grim siege of Lyons, paralysed trade in the south: the furs were impounded, and when Baux's were finally able to obtain their release, they were found to be worm-eaten and practically worthless. (1)

Marchand himself was appointed a major in the Marseilles National Guard; he was, however, primarily a sailor, and he resigned this commission within a very short time in favour of the command of a ship bound for the Ile de France. It was there, on 15 May 1793, that he died. But for Fleurieu, he might soon have been forgotten - yet he was an able sailor, with some claim to fame. He was one of the only two Frenchmen who, for over a century - from 1714 to 1818 - completed the circumnavigation of the globe in the course of a single voyage; the other was Bougainville.

The voyage of the Solide heralded the coming of the trading vessels of the nineteenth century. Although, from the commercial point of view, Marchand's expedition was a failure - Baux's lost two-thirds of their capital in this venture - it proved that, given the opportunity and freedom from the tiresome monopolies so prevalent under the Old Régime, the French could compete efficiently in the Pacific with other mercantile nations. The voyage of the Solide was not ambitious, her captain knew what was expected of him and what he could achieve, and her owners backed him with their faith and to the full extent of their resources. What defeated them was the unparalleled revolutionary upheaval that was tearing France asunder, destroying d'Entrecasteaux's expedition in the East, and was soon to do the same with Baudin's in Australia. That Marchand failed, by a matter of only a few weeks, to become the first discoverer of the northern Marquesas was perhaps inevitable in an ocean that was to be, within a very few years, just another seaway.

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(1) Ibid., vol. II, p. 552.

- 8 -

BAUDIN.

The true motives behind the Baudin diplomatic expedition have remained a matter of controversy. Baudin sailed at a time when mistrust and suspicion poisoned all fields of human endeavour, and when the most obvious activities were interpreted as subtle diplomatic moves. The scene had radically altered since d'Entrecasteaux had led the last official expedition - the Terror had risen and fallen, Robespierre had followed Louis XVI to the guillotine, the Directory was rapidly giving way to the autocracy of Napoleon. The French, war-weary after more than ten years of internal and external bloodshed, were slowly re-adjusting themselves to a new regime considerably different in its social relationships from what they had known before.

With Napoleon began a period of development, not merely in international and administrative matters, but also in the sciences and the arts. Baudin's voyage can easily be ascribed to a desire for scientific and geographical discoveries, at a time when Napoleon wanted to impress Europe with his interest in non-military questions - the cultural offensive is a familiar feature of authoritarian governments. At the same time, this motive can in turn lead to confusion and oversimplification. It is somewhat misleading, for instance, to state, as some have done, that the expedition sailed under the patronage of the Emperor, since Napoleon did not assume that title until two months after the expedition had returned to France, although, in view of the power held by Bonaparte in 1800, when it sailed, there is no denying that Baudin could never had left without his personal approval.

What must be borne in mind is that the expedition was Baudin's own idea, a 'projet de voyage' for an exploration of part of the South Sea having been drawn up by him and forwarded to the Minister of the Navy as early as 1798, when Napoleon was in Egypt. Although the times were still unstable and consideration of the plan was delayed by financial difficulties, the Institut (1) to which the proposal had been referred

(1) The Institut National replaced the old Académie des Sciences.

set up a committee to examine it; among its members were Fleurieu, who probably played his usual major part in drawing up the instructions (1), Bougainville and the scientist Lacépède. In April 1800 the committee had drawn up its own 'Plan de Voyage', stressing that it was along the Australian coast that ~~lay~~ the greatest expanse of uncharted territory lay.(2)

The proposed expedition, considered the Institut, would be 'most interesting for the sciences as well as for politics. It is important for France to become well acquainted with the two straits which divide New Holland - from Van Diemen's Land in the south, and from New Guinea in the north. This consideration along would be a sufficient motive to decide on this expedition.' (3)

Was the delay between Baudin's original proposal of 1798 and its eventual acceptance in a modified form two years later due to the normal processes of the administration under the Directoire, to economic difficulties, to the war - or was it due to a lack of interest that was not banished until Napoleon came on the scene and realised the political advantages that could derive from the exploration of an unknown tract of land in an enormous continent? The British had begun to settle in the eastern regions - but it was not too late to forestall them in the comparatively unknown south and west. To the British, this last motive seemed the more likely one; this belief was strengthened by the publication of the first volume of the official account by François Péron in 1807 (4), with an English

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(1) See E. Scott, 'Baudin's Voyage of Exploration to Australia', in the English Historical Review, April 1913, p. 343.

(2) The sequence is as follows: the Committee examined Baudin's suggestion in March 1800, and a delegation called on Napoleon on April 1st; Napoleon gave his approval in principle six days later. (J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 104). The Institut then drew up detailed plans at the end of April, and these were approved by the Minister of the Navy and, one presumes, by Napoleon himself, soon after.

(3) E. Scott, 'Baudin's Voyage of Exploration', p. 343; this is a quotation from the French National Archives, Marine BB4.999.

(4) Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes, vo. I.

translation in 1809. In it, Péron, for purely personal reasons, never mentions Baudin by name; he does not ascribe the original conception of the voyage to the captain, but to the Institut. To the British, locked in a great struggle with the French Empire, the expedition appeared to have been planned, not by a scientifically-minded sailor at a time when Napoleon was only a successful general, but by an ambitious head of state. The instructions themselves, reprinted by Péron, revealed the hope held at the time that Australia might be not one continent, but two:

'[We were] to visit the part of the continent masked by these islands [St Peter and St Francis] where it was supposed that a Strait existed communicating from this point with the bottom of the Gulf of Carpentaria and which, in consequence, would have cut New Holland in two great islands of practically equal size.' (1)

The natural inference was that the French hoped to found a settlement on the western island and, in wartime, to expel the British who had settled at Port Jackson. The exploration of the south coast and of Bass Strait was thus of interest not solely to the sciences but also, as the Institut had pointed out in the hope of attracting Napoleon's favour, to politics. It was also a survey of the quickest route from Pondicherry or the Ile de France to Port Jackson, a near-indefensible settlement isolated from Europe, and embarrassed by large numbers of convicts who could be expected to side with France if an attack eventuated. (2)

Whether all these considerations entered Napoleon's head when he approved the proposal is uncertain. The question must be kept in perspective, and viewed against the wider background of European politics.

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(1) Péron, Voyage de Découvertes, vol. I, p. 5. Péron himself had no doubts about the political basis of the expedition. 'Always vigilant in regard to whatever may humiliate the eternal rival of our nation,' he wrote, 'the First Consul, soon after the Revolution of 9 November 1799, decided upon our expedition'. Péron to Decaen, Governor of the Ile de France, 11 December 1803, quoted in H.M. Cooper, French Exploration in South Australia 1802-1803, pp. 193-4. Péron's reliability is limited to scientific subjects.

(2) For a study of the political possibilities, see J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, pp. 109-13.

As we have seen, there were Frenchmen long before Napoleon, who were interested in the economic and strategic possibilities of settlements and outposts in or near the Pacific, but it is easy to overestimate their influence. Certainly, Napoleon, aware of the impending struggle with England, had no objections to raise against a project that could advance science, shed some glory on his administration, embarrass his enemies, and bring back some reliable information about British plans in the Western Pacific. It is unwise to read more in Baudin's expedition than this; the voyage belongs to the tradition of scientific travel that went back to Bougainville; it is the last of the great adventures. What is certain is that, if the French were sent as spies, then never has a spy ring been so carefully camouflaged by layers of scientists, and never has a band of spies squabbled more, or been less efficient in the execution of its secret orders.

It is hard to say how much of the disruption which soon showed itself on board was due to Baudin's character, how much to the independent and quarrelsome spirit of the scientists, and how much to the social upheaval of the time. Baudin was no Kerguelen - he was activated by the determination to carry out his task at all costs, even at the cost of his life. He was, say two of his historians, 'An old sea dog, hard towards himself and towards others, a slave of duty, insistent on the strict observation of the time table - something which is difficult to work in with the requirements of scientific work - heavy-handed towards the younger men who were themselves unruly, disrespectful to the point of insolence, certainly restless and determined to have their own way.' (1) He was nevertheless deeply interested in scientific research, and thus all the more impatient of the younger scientists - the most troublesome of whom François Péron, was only twenty-five (2) -

(1) Bouvier and Maynial, Une Aventure dans les mers Australes, p.36.
(2) Baudin was forty-six. Péron, who had served in the Revolutionary Army in his 'teens, had lost an eye in battle and had been taken prisoner before his nineteenth birthday. His primary interest was anthropology.

who in turn despised him. Yet Baudin had already distinguished himself on three botanical voyages when in the service of Joseph II (1), and had led a scientific expedition to the West Indies from 1796 to 1798.

The success of this last voyage, during which he first evolved his plan to explore the Australian coast, earned him the rank of captain, and the friendship of the scientists who had gone with him - some like Mauger and Riedlé willingly accepting his invitation to accompany him a second time. (2) His energy and enthusiasm on the Australian voyage revealed once more his ability, and his capacity for work over and above the ordinary duties of a captain at sea.

'His journal', wrote Bory St Vincent, the zoologist, 'was an enormous bound volume opened out on his table ... This journal contained a multitude of drawings of molluscs, of fishes, and of other items of natural history, painted with a perfection and a lifelikeness that nothing can approach.' (3)

And yet Hamelin, who commanded the second ship of the expedition, the Naturaliste, had relatively few troubles in his relations with his officers and scientists; there was a difference in the atmosphere of the ships that cannot entirely be explained by the lesser responsibility borne by Hamelin; furthermore a high proportion of those who sailed with Baudin achieved high honour in later life, whereas Kerguelen's troublemakers relapsed into obscurity. A proportion of blame must fall on Baudin's shoulders, and the cause is probably his ill-health - the pulmonary tuberculosis, from which he died, and which made rapid progress in the cramped conditions of the ship. His task was not made any easier by the twenty-two savants - botanists, zoologists, mineralogists, painters, draughtsmen and gardeners - who had been added to the expedition as a result of the enthusiasm of the Institute, or of their own string-

(1) In 1786 to 1789 and 1792. He was not an émigré but, having joined Joseph II's service before the Revolution, he remained abroad until 1795. See J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 103.

(2) 'Voyage aux Iles Ténérife, La Trinité, St. Thomas, Ste Croix et Porto Rico, by A.P. Le Dru, was published in 1810 as a defense against Péron's implied accusations. It praised his ability and courage on his earlier voyage.

(3) Bouvier and Maynial, Une Aventure, p. 83.

pulling; the scientific equipment - which even included a sextant once used by Cook (1) - the additional personal luggage, and extra stores, created an 'encombrement' that was a constant worry to him. When, in the later stage of the voyage, food became scarce, it did not relieve the pressure on space, for room then had to be found for the growing collections of natural history specimens.

Jacques Félix Emmanuel Hamelin, who had to contend with similar difficulties, was thirty-two years of age. He had, as frigate captain, taken part in the abortive French attempts to assist the Irish in 1796, and had led a number of brief cruises off the French coast, before requesting to join the Baudin expedition. He was eventually to reach the rank of rear-admiral, and to head the 'Dépot des Cartes et Plans'. Baudin's own second-in-command on the Géographe was Le Bas de Sainte Croix, also a frigate captain; his astronomer was Pierre François Bernier, a brilliant young mathematician from the Ecole Polytechnique. Also in the Géographe was Pierre Gicquel des Touches - La Billardière's worthy 'citizen Gicquel', whose presence of mind and sharp eyes had saved d'Entrecasteaux's ships off New Britain in 1793, and whose name as a result appeared on French charts of the area - now no longer a mere ensign, but a lieutenant. Two brothers served as ensigns - one to each ship, as was the custom - Henri de Freycinet, and his younger brother Louis, who was to be the later and somewhat partial historian of the expedition. To these must be added the name of Hyacinthe de Bougainville, who was one day, like his more illustrious father, to lead his own expedition into the Pacific, (2) and of the ensign St Cricq, of the Naturaliste, who was a nephew of admiral Mazarredo y Salazar, the Spanish ambassador to Paris and later Minister of the Navy under Joseph Bonaparte.(3)

Among the scientists, J.B. Bory de St Vincent and Leschenault de la

(1) Faivre, op.cit., p. 119.
(2) His father had lent him his journal of the first voyage to the Falkland Islands to use as a model for his own. Note of H. de Bougainville, dated August 1815, in N.B., N.A.F. 9407-26.
(3) Préfet Maritime du Havre to Minister of the Navy, 4 October 1800, BN. Marine BB4-996.

Tour were to achieve later fame; the latter, who spent three years studying the flora of Java, was to undertake, with the blessing and protection of Sir Joseph Banks, an epic six-year voyage through India and Ceylon. Alexander von Humboldt, already on his travels in South America, had hoped to join Baudin's expedition, but circumstances were against it. (1)

The two ships - the Géographe of 350 tons, and 30 guns, and formerly named the Galatée; and the Naturaliste of a slightly smaller tonnage, and 20 guns, formerly the Menaçante - were copper-sheathed. The smaller ship was also much slower, something which was to be a source of constant irritation. They were both ready to sail in October 1800, and on the 19th of that month, after a ceremonial farewell, they sailed from Le Havre. Outside, the Prosélyte, a British frigate, stopped them to examine the passport which the British Government had previously issued in their favour. (2) They proceeded to the Canaries, where trouble started; Baudin blames the Savants, 'whose knowledge is not so extensive as their numbers would lead one to think'. The painter Lebrun came to blows on the mole with the surgeon, while Henri Freycinet, 'one of my officers, and much too young to be one,' (3) fell into bad company; the departure from the port 'was not without its difficulties, because all the scientists, wanting to know what was going on aboard or on the pier, were mixed in with all the manoeuvres, and impeded us infinitely'. (4) Already weary of the squabbling youths, Baudin made up his mind to leave at the Ile de France those he considered the ringleaders. Unfortunately, at this stage he made an error of judgment that brought into question his ability as a sailor, and helped to undermine his authority, so

(1) Faivre, op. cit., p. 108n.
(2) The passport had been granted 'without a moment's hesitation', wrote Sir Joseph Banks to A.L. de Jussieu on 10 August 1796. See Gavin de Beer, op. cit., p. 257.
(3) Henri was twenty-three, Louis was twenty-one.
(4) Baudin, Journal, 23 Brumaire, An 9 (15 Nov. 1800).

that only by being severe to the point of harshness could he retrieve it.

He first of all sailed too close to the African coast, and found himself plagued by calms and contrary winds; then, hoping to make up for lost time, he sailed down to the 36th degree of southern latitude, where he hoped to find a southerly wind that would take him speedily to the Ile de France; he found instead weak breezes and a strong north-westerly current. These setbacks resulted in the expedition taking five months, instead of the customary three, to reach Port Louis, arriving there on 15 March 1801. This unfortunate start had far-reaching consequences: too much food had been used during this crossing, and little was obtainable in wartime from the Ile de France; the health and the morale of the sailors were low, so that desertions were numerous; and, finally, the proposed itinerary had to be abandoned. According to the original instructions, (1) Baudin was to obtain a third ship at the Ile de France,(2) and sail straight to d'Entrecasteaux Channel in Tasmania, there to survey in detail the various rivers seen by the French in 1792 and 1793, but not thoroughly examined at the time; he was then to sail around the north-east coast of the island to Bass Strait, which had been discovered in 1798. From there he was to begin sailing in a westward direction, completing the exploration of the entire length of the south coast of Australia as far as Cape Leeuwin, and thence, along the west coast of Australia, north to Timor. From this island, he was to sail down the south-west and south coast of New Guinea as far as Endeavour Strait, and to return to Port Louis direct from the coast of Carpentaria.

As we shall see, the alteration of this plan, which was forced on Baudin by the delay incurred in the Atlantic, was to cost him the honour of being the first discoverer of many features of the

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(1) As published by Péron, Voyage de Découvertes, vol. I, pp. 5-7.

(2) 'For the safety and success of captain Baudin's expedition, it would be advantageous if he had at his disposal a light vessel ...'— Unsigned draft of a letter to the administrators of the Ile de France, 30 September 1800, BN. Marine BB4-995/Pl.3.

coast of South Australia. The third ship, meanwhile, was quite out of the question. The French in Mauritius had been able to survive the war only by raiding enemy shipping, and they had no intention of depleting their limited supplies by helping a scientific expedition that could bring them no relief. For ten years they had been endeavouring to steer a safe course between the warring factions of the Paris government; they were cautious and outwardly loyal, but they had no respect for orders from France signed by Ministers who, for all they knew, had already met their fate on the guillotine. The new arrivals insisted that General Bonaparte was bringing stability to the administration of France, but it was the sort of tale the colonists had heard before. There certainly did not appear to be much stability about the Baudin expedition: twenty officers and scientists were leaving it, some at the captain's request, others at their own; and, encouraged by local privateers, forty sailors had deserted. Baudin's relations with the Intendant became so strained that they finally refused to meet each other, and resorted to communicating by letter. Eventually, Baudin realised that the local authorities had no intention of helping him; quite the opposite, they were trying to retain his ships and his crews for use against an expected English attack on the island.

Unable to obtain funds from the French, Baudin finally succeeded in borrowing 10,000 piastres through a Danish captain, though at a rate of 33.1/3%. To force the Intendent to bring back some, at least, of the deserters, he kept thirty negro slaves on board, fully knowing that the local authorities made a good income by renting their services to shipowners.

The two ships finally sailed on 25 April 1801, sailing east-south-east. Some of the weaker elements had been left behind, and there was, at any rate, more room to move about. In the expectancy of reaching a land where they would be able to engage in research, the scientists spent the following weeks in relative peace; it almost seemed as if the men who had been left behind had been the sole cause

of the dissensions. Australia was seen on 17 May in Latitude 34°20' (1) which is practically that of Cape Leeuwin. It was then, as we have seen, that they cleared up the question of the existence of St Allouarn islands. Baudin followed the coast in a northerly direction - gone was the plan to sail to Tasmania; what now mattered was to get supplies from Timor. So impatient were the scientists to begin their work that they dredged the sea bottom, bringing up a variety of weeds, sponges and corals; it was an excitement which Baudin, as keen on natural history as any of them, enthusiastically shared. On 30 May 1801, the ships anchored in what is now Geographe Bay, in latitude 33°30' south and longitude 115°30' east, by Bernier's reckoning, (2) not far from the present town of Busselton.

Henri Freycinet, the gardener Riedlé, and the mineralogist Depuch were the first to step ashore. A stay of well over a week was contemplated, and there would be opportunities to do some valuable work, Enthusiasm and impatience led to misfortune. A lake or a river had been seen inside Geographe Bay; it might have provided entry into the hinterland. The longboat was sent, but a high wind prevented its return to the ship and it grounded. Lebas de Ste. Croix, Baudin's second-in-command, who was in charge, delayed his return in the forlorn hope of saving the boat, while Baudin sent him impatient signals. (3) All that happened was that the materials sent to repair the craft had in part to be jettisoned, as did the plants and the specimens collected by the naturalists; and, in attempting to load some of these, a sailor named Vasse was drowned. (4)

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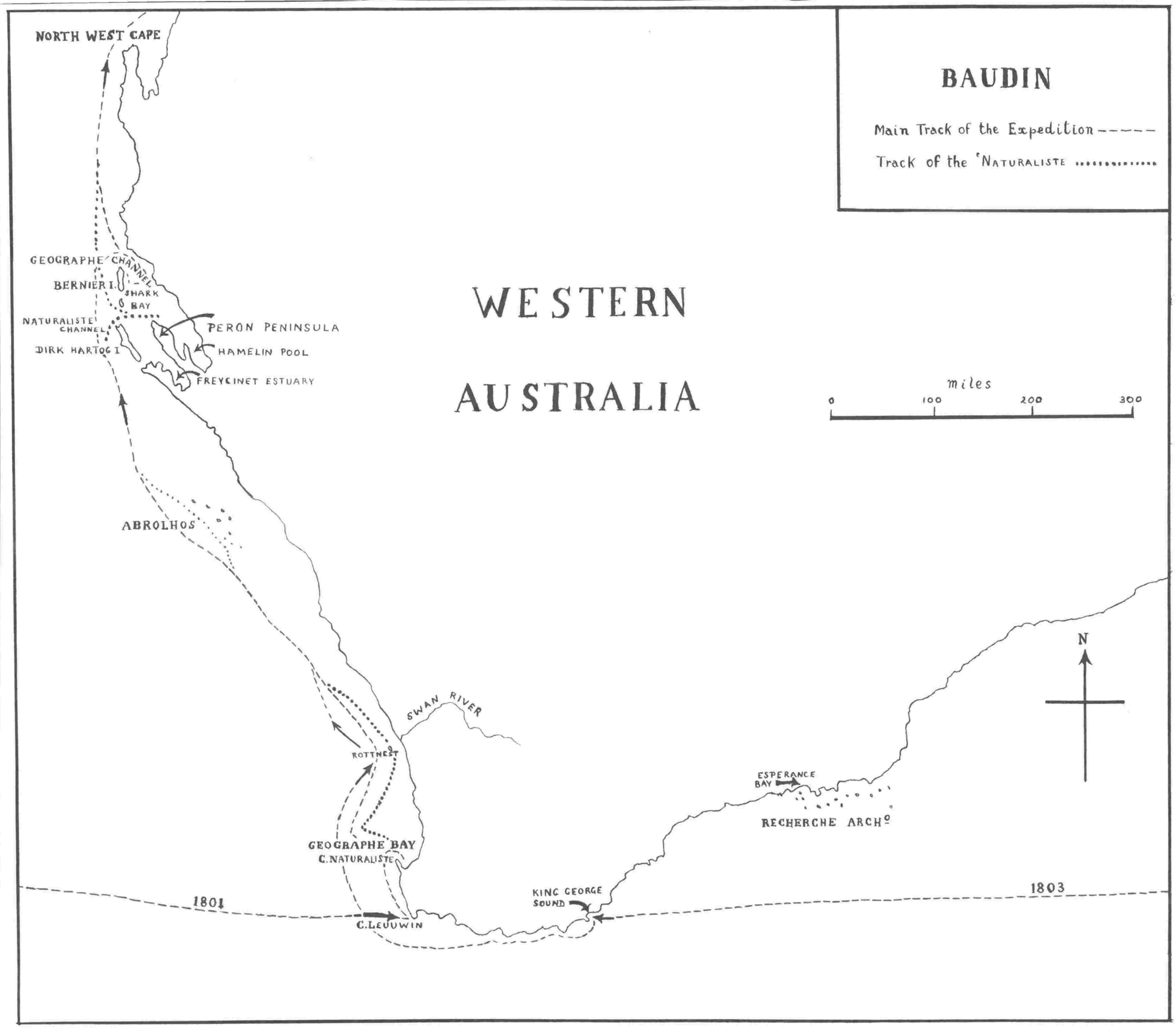
(1) Freycinet, Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes, p.4.

(2) 'M.Bernier a observé à terre 33°30' et 113'10'32". Freycinet, Ibid. p.483.

(3) The commander was genuinely concerned about the safety of the men whom, he feared, might be attacked by aborigines. 'I had been living for three whole days without being able to find even at night the rest that is necessary to me', he wrote.

(4) His name remains today in the Vasse river, and in the town of the same name, five miles south-west of Busselton - an even greater honour to his memory than has been accorded to Baudin himself. There is however a local tradition, told to local settlers by aborigines, that Vasse survived, and lived in the area for some years. - Australian Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, p.222.


BAUDIN
Main Track of the Expedition
Track of the 'NATURALISTE
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
miles
0
100
200
300
N
NORTH WEST CAPE
GEOGRAPHE CHANNEL
BERNIER I.
SHARK BAY
NATURALISTE CHANNEL
DIRK HARTOG I
PERON PENINSULA
HAMELIN POOL
FREYCINET ESTUARY
ABROLHOS
SWAN RIVER
ROTTNEST
GEOGRAPHE BAY
C. NATURALISTE
C. LEUUWIN
KING GEORGE SOUND
ESPERANCE BAY
RECHERCHE ARCHº
1801
1803

Nº 20

Baudin's intention was to survey the west coast of Australia, on his way to Timor, and two meeting places had been decided upon in case of separation - Rottnest Island off the mouth of the Swan River, and Dampier's Shark Bay further north. When, as Baudin had expected, the high wind developed into a gale, and the two ships were driven out of sight of each other, the Naturaliste sailed for Rottnest, where she arrived on 14 June. While waiting for Baudin, Hamelin despatched one of the boats to explore the Swan River, while the other travelled for fifty miles upriver from the estuary; (1) a survey was also made of Rottnest and of the nearby islands, which Freycinet was to name 'Iles Louis Napoléon'. (2) The Géographe appeared on 18 June to the south-west of the anchorage, but the weather was bad, and Baudin apparently failed to see the Naturaliste, for although Hamelin waited for him he sailed on to Shark Bay. When Hamelin realised what Baudin had done, he sailed promptly for Shark Bay, but by the time he arrived Baudin had already left for Timor. The comedy of errors did not end until the two ships eventually rejoined at Timor, but neither vessel had wasted the intervening period.

Baudin had reached Dirk Hartog Island on 23 June 1801; he entered the bay four days later by way of Geographe Channel. The bay was then explored, although no landing was effected on the 'Middle Island', which was not an island but a peninsula - Peron Peninsula. Some time was spent visiting the 'Sterile Islands' at the entrance to the bay - Dorré and Bernier islands - where the officers hunted the kangaroo, and the naturalists gathered specimens. The inevitable clash occurred between Baudin and Péron who, led by his usual enthusiasm, got lost ashore and caused the captain to waste a day waiting for him. On 14 July, the Géographe sailed out, going north

(1) Freycinet, Voyage, p. 5.
(2) Ibid., p. 169.

and north-east towards Witts' Land. Knowledge, especially French knowledge, of this coast was very imperfect, and Baudin's instructions required him to survey it. This work took nearly a month, from 20 July to 10 August 1801. A number of islands and features were discovered and named; Montebello Islands, the Legendre Island, Thevenard Island, Cape Dupuy, Cape Lambert, Point Thouin, these names remaining today. Deprived of her consort and with too great a draught, the Géographe could not hazard herself too far between these small islands, for there was no one to come to her assistance if she should become grounded on a shoal, or strike a hidden reef. Nor was the coast any more appealing; it was the low arid line of Eighty Mile Beach, with the great desert behind it. Shortly after this, the Géographe reached the group of islands still known as Bonaparte Archipelago; on 14 August, the expedition was off Cassini Island, near Admiralty Gulf; Cape Bougainville lay ahead, after which the coast would begin to run to the east. The choice now lay between continuing the exploration to Arnhem Land and sailing north to Timor.

'At this time, the shortage of food and, especially, of drinking water, made a respite imperative. The tiredness of the crew, their exhaustion, the sickness which was already developing, were pressing reasons for forsaking an inhospitable coast. These considerations persuaded the commander to sail for Timor, where he had, moreover, hopes of meeting his consort.' (1) In consequence, as Freycinet points out, the exploration had to remain incomplete in a number of respects. Since the Géographe had left the Ile de France less than four months earlier, the scarcity of supplies, and the consequent curtailment of this part of the voyage, must be ascribed to the difficulties encountered by Baudin in obtaining supplies at Port Louis, and, to a lesser degree, to the length of the voyage from France to Mauritius.

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(1) Freycinet, Voyage, p. 5.

Kupang was reached on 22 August 1801. The Dutch were cooperative - they were glad to see a friendly ship, as they had been attacked by the English during the previous year, and were in fact so short of gunpowder that the Governor sent a message to the French requesting them to omit the customary salute. The island was another rich hunting ground for the naturalists, but it was also unhealthy - dysentery struck Baudin himself, Riedlé and many others.

Meanwhile, Hamelin was charting Shark Bay. The Naturaliste had arrived there on 16 July - only two days after Baudin's departure. Hamelin might just have caught up with the Géographe, had he not delayed on the way to carry out a brief examination of Houtman's Abrolhos. The Naturaliste now entered the bay by the channel north of Dirk Hartog Island - Naturaliste Channel. An observatory was established on Peron Peninsula, and boat and walking parties carried out a very thorough exploration of the large bay and its extremely indented coastline. Practically the only part that was neglected was the eastern side of Hamelin pool, which has dangerously shallow harbours biting deep into the land: a host of French names now commemorate the work of the French - the main ones being Hamelin Pool to the east, which is separated by sixty-mile long Peron Peninsula from Henri-Freycinet Estuary. As Bouvier and Maynial point out in their history of the voyage, the two harbours should have been called Baudin and Hamelin, after the two captains (1); although Baudin did little work here, and although it is fair that the name of Freycinet should be remembered because it was a Freycinet (2) who was responsible for some of the best charting carried out here, it must be pointed out that the western harbour is called Henri-Freycinet Estuary, and that Henri was on board Baudin's ship - so that this is just another instance of the many slights done to the captain by his officers.

Having found and restored an inscription left by the Dutch on

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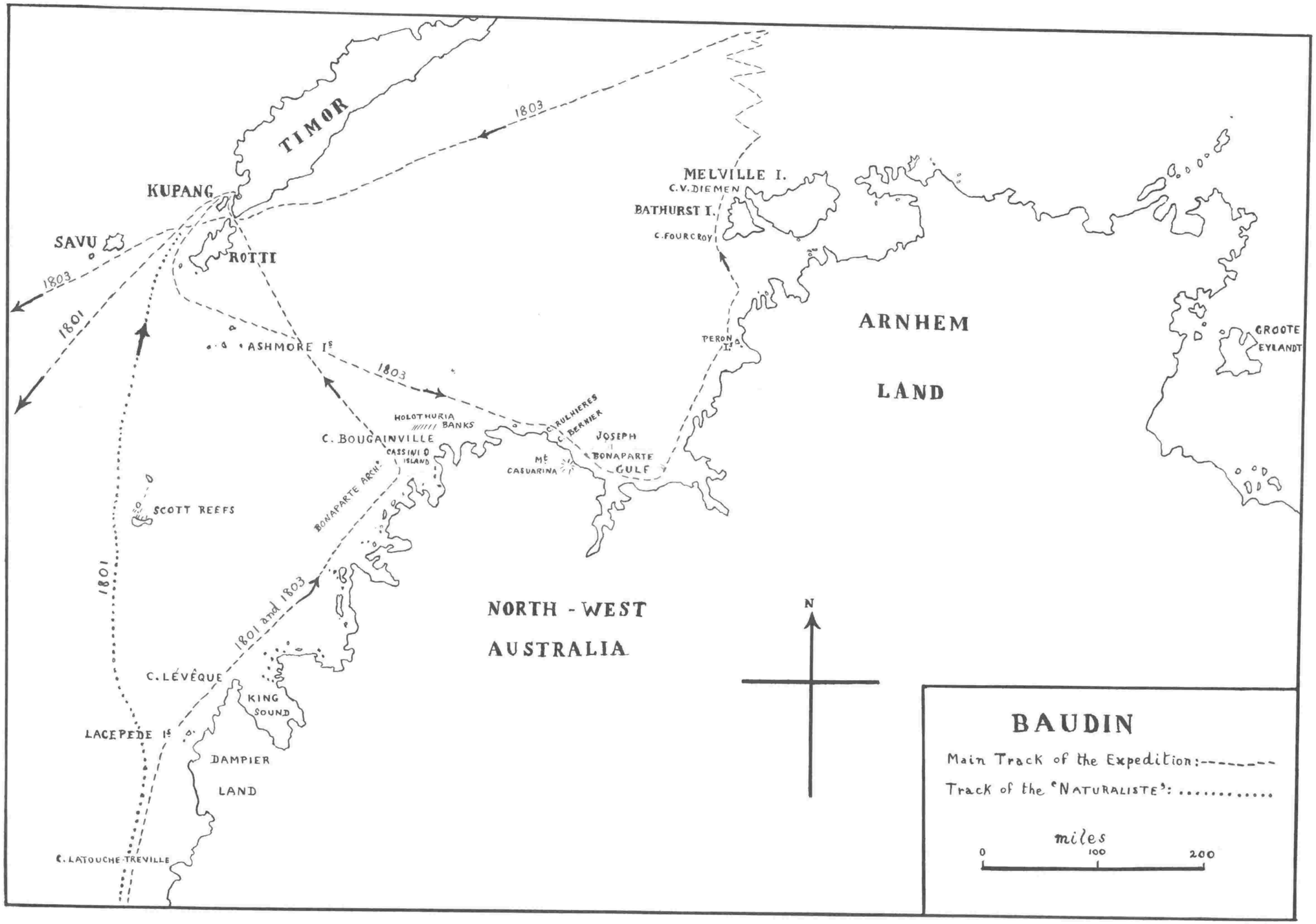
(1) Op. cit., p. 115.
(2) Louis, not Henri.


TIMOR
KUPANG
SAVU
ROTTI
1803
1801
ASHMORE Is
HOLOTHURIA BANKS
C. BOUGAINVILLE
CASSINI ISLAND
BONAPARTE ARCH.
SCOTT REEFS
1801 and 1803
C. LÉVÊQUE
KING SOUND
LACEPEDE Is
DAMPIER LAND
C. LATOUCHE-TREVILLE
C. RULHIERES
C. BERNIER
JOSEPH BONAPARTE GULF
Mt CASUARINA
MELVILLE I.
C. V. DIEMEN
BATHURST I.
C. FOURCROY
PERON I.
ARNHEM LAND
GROOTE EYLANDT
NORTH - WEST AUSTRALIA
N
BAUDIN
Main Track of the Expedition:--------
Track of the 'NATURALISTE': .....
miles
0
100
200

No 21

Dirk Hartog Island, commemorating the arrival of the Eendracht in 1616, the French added a note of their own visit. The Naturaliste had now spent over six weeks in the bay. On 4 September, Hamelin sailed for Timor, and he anchored in Kupang on 21 September, a month after Baudin's arrival.

Troubled by sickness and what amounted to a near mutiny among his officers, Baudin sailed from Kupang on 13 November 1801. It was now approaching the southern summer, and it was time to go south. Forced out towards the west, the ships sailed in a wide arc down the Indian Ocean and towards Tasmania. Le Villain, the zoologist, and Sautier, the second gardener, both died during the passage. Concerned lest this should further depress the other scientists affected by illness, Baudin endeavoured as best he could to keep the deaths from them. Van Diemen's Land was sighted on 13 January 1802; the ships anchored first in d'Entrecasteaux Channel, then sailed to Oyster Bay on the east coast on 17 February, and remained there until the 27th of the same month. The new longboat, which the French had begun building at Timor and completed at sea, was sent to examine the neighbouring bays to see if the British had established a settlement at any point. None was found: Tasmania was still uninhabited, except for the roaming bands of aborigines, who were as friendly with Baudin's men as they had been with d'Entrecasteaux's. (1) Faure, the hydrographer in the Naturaliste, solved the problem of Tasman Island by proving that it was in fact a peninsula; it was the only matter of importance that d'Entrecasteaux had left for them. There was, indeed, not much more to do in southern Tasmania than to rest, to fish, and to look for specimens to add to the growing collections. Hunting was another relaxation, but it grew to such proportions that Baudin and Hamelin were forced to issue orders that no one was to go ashore with guns - whereupon Baillée, the mineralogist,

(1) 'Péron was the first trained anthropologist to enter into personal relations with Tasmania's vanished race,' - L.A.Triebel, 'Péron in Australia' in the Australian Quarterly, March 1949, vol.XXI, No.1, p.103. At the time, however, anthropology had hardly begun, and it would be rash to regard Péron as trained in the modern sense.

killed a wallaby by hurling his geological hammer at it. Tension had begun to develop on board the Naturaliste, and Hamelin, perturbed by this, requested Baudin to take his young second lieutenant Millius into the Géographe, but Baudin declined - he had quite enough trouble of his own.

While in Oyster Bay, Faure discovered Geographe Strait between Schouten Island and the mainland, and the headland which forms the bay was carefully charted, and named Freycinet Peninsula, a name it still retains. It was here, too, that Baudin lost his ~~other~~ old friend, Mauger, who was buried on Maria Island on 21 February.

Baudin wanted a complete chart of the eastern coast of Van Diemen's Land, which d'Entrecasteaux had not been able to examine; it had been seen by Furneaux in 1773, and by Bass and Flinders in 1799, but there was still a great deal to be surveyed, especially as the French had only imperfect knowledge of the 1799 expedition. On 6 March, Baudin despatched the longboat under Maurouard, to enable the hydrographer Boulanger to draw plans of the coast, 'as he is short-sighted, and can take bearings only when he has his nose against the land...' Maurouard had instructions to keep within sight of the ships, and to return before nightfall; either because the ships had drifted too far, or because Maurouard neglected his instructions until it was too dark, the longboat was lost to sight, nor was there any sign of it next morning. While the two ships were manoeuvring under shortened sail to find the longboat, the Naturaliste struck the Géographe, inflicting fortunately only slight damage. (1) To complicate matters, Baudin fell ill, and was forced to hand over command to Henri de Freycinet; soon after, contact with the Naturaliste was lost in the rising wind. The Géographe spent four days sailing slowly along the coast in a northerly direction, hoping to find the longboat; then, at a meeting of officers and scientists, it was decided to

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(1) Baudin, Journal, 15 Ventôse, An X.

return to the south, since it seemed clear that the longboat could not be so far to the north. There were, however, some English whalers about: the Géographe met one on the 10 March, and at nearly the same time Hamelin was speaking to the captain of the Harrington, an English brig, who had found the longboat and its occupants, and who now transferred them to the Naturaliste. It seems clear that the French would have perished, had the English not rescued them, for they had taken with them only one day's supply of food.

Freycinet, his search still fruitless, decided to sail to Waterhouse Island, the appointed rendezvous, to await the Naturaliste, but once again the two ships missed each other. While Hamelin sailed south to look for the Géographe, Baudin decided to undertake alone the exploration of the south coast of Australia. It was a difficult decision, but supplies were short, and Baudin could not spend an indefinite period cruising off Tasmania in the hope of rescuing the longboat: that task he left to the Naturaliste; as it turned out, he was right, but there is, on the debit side, the strong probability that Baudin was not sorry to get rid of the slower vessel.

When the Naturaliste entered Bass Strait on 1 April, Baudin was off the Australian coast; Hamelin went to Port Dalrymple on 5 and 6 April, to Port Western on 9 to 17 April; then, thinking that the Géographe, which was in a bad way, had been forced to go to Port Jackson, he sailed to the British settlement, arriving on 25 April. There was no news of her. Indefatigably, Hamelin sailed out again on 18 May, as soon as he had taken on a few supplies. He was becoming increasingly worried about the other ship, which he now firmly believed to be in real trouble somewhere along the Tasmanian coast, but his further voyage to the south yielded no results and, when a storm drove his ship off the southern coast, he returned to Port Jackson. There, on 28 June, he found the Géographe at anchor. The efforts made by Hamelin to find Baudin deserve the greatest praise; it was unfortunate that they were unnecessary, but this in no way detracts from the honour due to him.

Baudin had begun his survey of the Australian coast on 28 March from Wilson's Promontory (1) at the entrance to Bass Strait, and sailed towards Port Philip Bay, where modern Melbourne now stands, but he did not see the concealed entry into this fine harbour. (2) The charts the French drew of the Victorian coast are not always reliable, justifying the complaints made by Baudin about his officers, who were anxious to have the work over and done with before the supplies ran out. (3) They made for the uncharted coast of Australia and, after sailing from Lacepede Bay towards a great gulf to the northeast, they sighted a ship in the distance, coming towards them. 'We thought it at first to be the Naturaliste, because we were far from believing that there were other Europeans in these waters and in that season of the year.' (4) It was, however, an English vessel, the Investigator, under the command of Matthew Flinders. (5)

The English had left Europe after Baudin, and there is little doubt that they hoped to forestall the French. The timetaken by Baudin to reach Mauritius, his difficulties on the island, and his consequent decision to go from Western Australia to Timor, had destroyed any hopes the French might have had of making prior discoveries in the Australian Bight, because Flinders himself had come straight from Cape Leeuwin. This meant that the strip of southern coastline where the French could claim original discoveries stretched only from Cape Banks, which Grant and Murray in the Lady Nelson had reached not many years before, and the place of their meeting with Flinders, now called Encounter Bay; to this strip can be added the southern and western sides of Kangaroo Island, which Flinders had not seen

(1) The western cape of this peninsula he named Cap des Représentations, because his officers had made certain complaints to him on that day. Freycinet altered this to Cap Marengo.
(2) Péron claims the harbour was sighted from the topmasts, but Baudin does not mention this in his journal. What Baudin does claim to have seen is Western Port. See E. Scott, Terre Napoléon., Ch. III; Baudin, Journal 8 to 10 Germinal, An X.
(3) H.M. Cooper, French Exploration, p. 185.
(4) Baudin, Journal, 18 Germinal An X.
(5) Bouvier and Maynial misconceive the exploration of southern Australia by Baudin. The write (p. 176) that 'on 18 April, the Géographe sees the Investigator in the area where they were seeking Boulanger's boat.' Baudin had given up the search for the lost longboat which was nowhere near Encounter Bay. The correct date is 8 April 1802.

since he had sailed north of it through Investigator Strait. It is in this area that the French names remain as memorials to Baudin's ship - Rivoli Bay, Guichen Bay, Lacépède Bay, d'Estrée Bay, Cape Gantheaume, Maupertuis Bay, Cape Borda. Had Baudin been able to carry out his original instructions, he would have had an advantage of nine months over the Englishman. (1)

Meanwhile, the two captains discussed their respective discoveries. Baudin betrayed no trace of disappointment - although he expresses his surprise in his Journal. The likelihood of meeting a British vessel off a continent where there was already a growing and well-established settlement must have been present in his mind. Off Tasmania, he had already met a whaler from Port Jackson and, as we have seen, Boulanger was rescued by another English ship. Flinders, who had at first taken the Géographe for a privateer from the Ile de France, was rather more reserved than Baudin. 'The English captain ... congratulated himself on this pleasant meeting, but was very reserved on other matters,' wrote Baudin, (2) but Flinders knew what he was about, whereas the Frenchman certainly did not realise the extent of Flinders' mission until the second day of their meeting.(3) Even then Baudin, who had as little English as Flinders had French, did not get a very clear picture of the work done by the Investigator. 'Baudin sometimes became confused by Flinders' explanations obtained through an interpreter'.(4) For instance, Baudin thought the Englishman had lost a sister ship, whereas Flinders was talking about a cutter. Although it is possible that Baudin did discover more when he finally called at Port Jackson, it is fairly clear that, especially in respect of the names given by Flinders to his discoveries, Baudin learned very little. This is

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(1) Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 149.

(2) Baudin, Journal, 17-18 Germinal, An X. E. Scott, Terre Napoleon, p. 46, believed that 'there was no need for reserve, and none was shown.' This applied only to Baudin.

(3) 'It somewhat surprised me that Captain Baudin made no enquiries concerning my business upon this unknown coast, but as he seemed more desirous of communicating information, I was happy to receive it.' — Flinders, A Voyage to Terra Australis, pp. 189-90.

(4) Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 144.

of some importance bacause, when Péron and Freycinet published their account, during and after the Napoleonic Wars, French names were given to many of the features which had been discovered by the Englishman. Since Flinders was later imprisoned for some years in Mauritius with his charts, the inference is that the French appropriated some of his discoveries and claimed them for their own, publishing the result of their work while their rival was in their power. This claim will be considered later; what concerns us at this stage is whether Baudin was himself a party to it, and how much he really knew of Flinders' voyage.

Baudin stands convicted at least of having altered Flinders' appellation of Kangaroo Island to Borda Island; he did so knowingly, but he justified his action in a letter to the Minister of the Navy, dated 29 May 1803: (1)

'Although the English discovered it several days before me, they have only seen a very small part, whereas I have examined it entirely and the dangers attached to it. I consider myself sufficiently authorised to change the name which they told me they had given to it.' (2)

He was thus prepared to alter a name given by Flinders only because he felt that he had a good claim to do so. Now, if Flinders was 'very reserved', as Baudin states, and as Flinders himself confirms, it would indicate that the Englishman did not go into details about his discoveries, or show charts to the Frenchman - in which case Baudin would have no alternative than to use French names as he continued his survey westwards. That Péron and Freycinet later altered, for political reasons, practically the entire

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(1) Quoted by H.M. Cooper, French Exploration, p. 80.

(2) These reasons are much the same as those put forward by James Cook to explain his altering to New Hebrides, the name Grandes Cyclades given to those islands by Bougainville. See The Voyage of the Resolution and the Adventure, (ed. J.C. Beaglehole), p. 521.

nomenclature adopted by Baudin is a rather sordid episode that need not concern us at present.

Baudin and Flinders parted after two days, Flinders continuing eastwards towards Bass Strait and, paying Baudin the only tribute ever accorded in Australia to him, he named a line of breakers, near Cape Jaffa, Baudin's Rocks. His name appears nowhere else in Australian geography.

Baudin sailed on towards Recherche Archipelago, where he would be able to complete the French survey of the entire south coast, and perhaps to add some features which Flinders might have overlooked. The mighty opening of Spencer Gulf he left for later detailed examination, realising that scurvy and the growing shortage of supplies would prevent a protracted stay at sea. (1) 'The biscuit we were using was also not very good, and for a long time had been crumbling, riddled by worms and eaten by moths.' (2) It was an understatement - the famished sailors were throwing the maggoty food overboard rather than eat it. (3) Firewood had completely run out, and they resorted to using broken planks and barrels to heat the stoves. By early May, westerly winds were beating the ship back, and Baudin was compelled to alter course for Tasmania; he intended to return after obtaining refreshments, and considered his initial survey sufficient. He had reached the appropriately-named Cap Adieu.

These unhappy French sailors, in their weakened condition and with unfavourable weather, found themselves unable to enter d'Entrecasteaux Channel; they anchored instead in Adventure Bay, off the west coast of Bruny Island on 10 May. The halt was very welcome, but southern Tasmania did not then provide satisfactory supplies for a European ship - no more in fact than a plentiful supply of

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(1) He notes for the first time on 16 May the scarcity of food and the appearance of scurvy, Journal, 15-16 Floreal, An X.
(2) Baudin, Journal, 16-17, Floreal, An X.
(3) Péron, Voyage, vol. I, p. 331.

fish and a few varieties of greens. No one, not even Baudin, could doubt that only at Port Jackson would help be found, but, when they weighed anchor on the 22nd the Captain still did not hasten to New South Wales, but hugged the coast, completing the survey left unfinished on his previous visit. 'At this time the westerlies were blowing fiercely; the atmosphere, continually clouded and humid, the sky laden with dark clouds, were obstacles to the completion of our geographical work, and harmful to the health of the crew which found itself reduced to the utmost distress. Scurvy indeed had been, for a long time, ravaging us fearfully.' (1) Yet the French remained on the east coast of Tasmania 'for thirteen days, vainly endeavouring to verify a few geographical positions already fixed by our previous work.' (2)

The captain ignored complaints and sarcasms. It was a combination of blind determination and of a desire to punish the officers, with whom he was now so much at loggerheads. 'The officers, like the naturalists and the scientists, were annoyed at my not taking advantage of the favourable wind to sail [to Port Jackson]. That was not really a matter of concern to me, since I had made up my mind, and wanted to delay a little longer before leaving this coast, rather than have to return to it a third time'. (3) 'As I did not see things in the same way as these gentlemen, I remained at sea rather than be compelled to return a fourth time (4) to this coast which, through their fault, had not been completed at a time when, unfortunately, I was ill, on account of their having not taken advantage of an occasion as favourable as the one that had offered itself, when we had travelled along it three times from North to South and from South to North.' (5)

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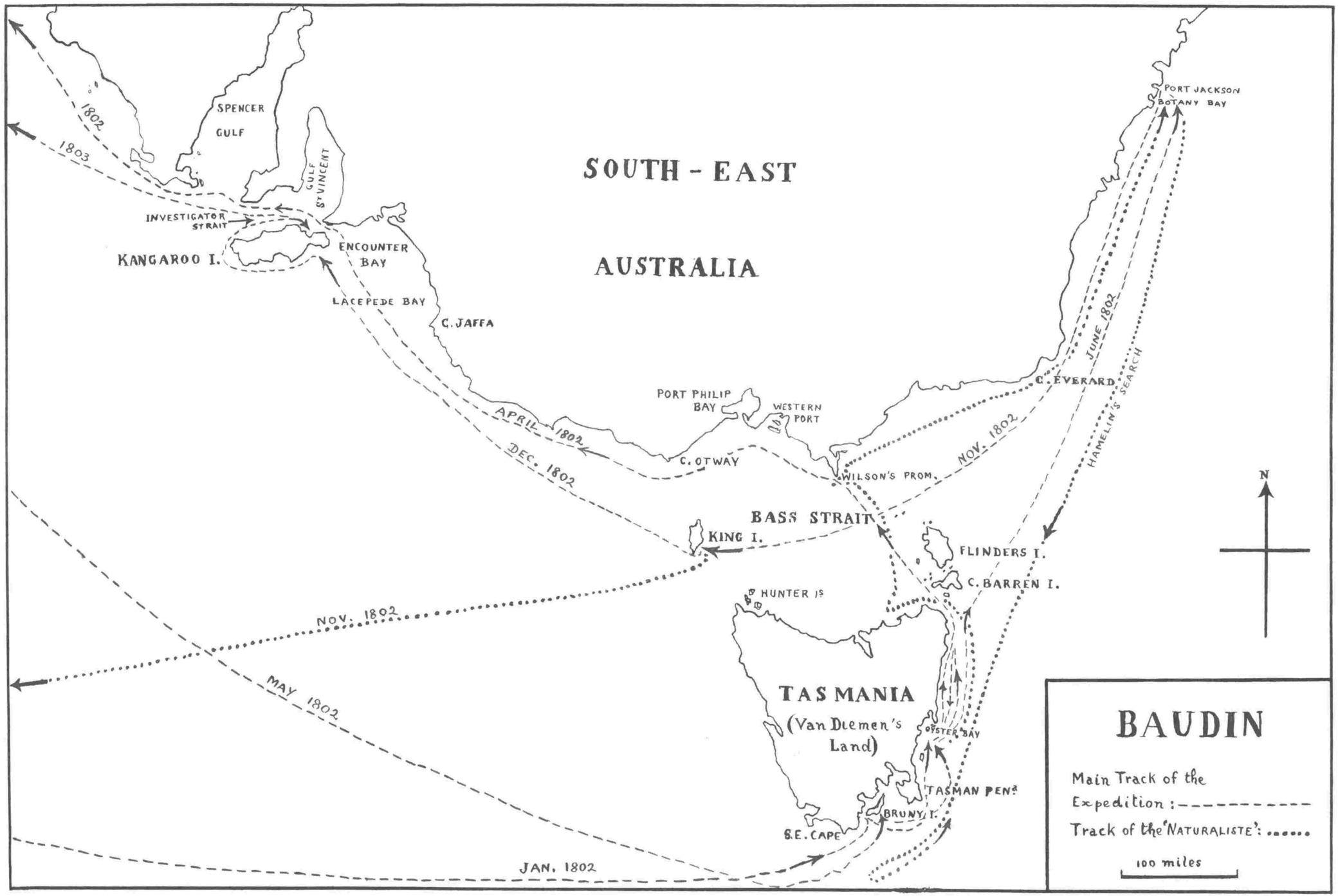
(1) Freycinet, Voyage, pp. 11-12.
(2) Ibid., p. 12.
(3) Baudin, Journal, 7-8 Prairial, An X.
(4) To give added weight to his comments, he now reckoned the doubling back of his tracks as a separate return to eastern Tasmania.
(5) Baudin, Journal, 10-11 Prairial, An X. The officers replied that they had not surveyed the coast while looking for Boulanger since that was his work and they did not want to compete with him.

Baudin, however, was not at war with his men, who if anything suffered more than the officers. Lharidon de Crémenec, the surgeon, drew up a list of the sick, and submitted it to the captain to encourage him to leave and to make for the British settlement. This list was frightening, and was not exaggerated, for soon, on 4 June 1802, there were only four sailors fit enough to work. (1) Baudin, nevertheless, still hesitated, but Nature, in the form of a gale, took a hand, and punished yet further the wallowing ship. The captain tried to persist in his task, defying equally the rolling seas, the approach of mid-winter, and the illness that was killing him; but it was no use, and he had to sail to Port Jackson. Even this was now beyond the strength of the crew, for the Géographe was unable to pass through the Heads unaided, and it was a relief crew of English sailors who helped the French to drop anchor at Port Jackson on 20 June 1802.

So weak were the crews, such was the condition of the ships, that the expedition had to remain five months in Port Jackson - from 20 June to 18 November. So many had died that it was decided to send the Naturaliste back to France; in her would sail those who were not strong enough in bodily health to withstand the hardships of further exploration; Hamelin was also to take back the naturalists' collections, thus making room in the Géographe for further specimens. Getting rid of the slow and cumbersome Naturaliste was a welcome move: for all Hamelin's goodwill and seamanship, she had been more trouble than she was worth. Baudin purchased instead a small ship for close investigation of the coastline, the Casuarina, so called because she was built of that timber, 29 feet long, and of very shallow draught; Louis de Freycinet was placed in command.

The stay in New South Wales provided opportunities for scientific expeditions in the environs of the settlement, for social exchange

(1) Freycinet, Voyage, p. 12.


SOUTH - EAST
AUSTRALIA
SPENCER
GULF
GULF
St VINCENT
INVESTIGATOR
STRAIT
KANGAROO I.
ENCOUNTER
BAY
LACEPEDE BAY
C. JAFFA
1802
1803
APRIL 1802
DEC. 1802
PORT PHILIP
BAY
WESTERN
PORT
C. OTWAY
WILSON'S PROM.
NOV. 1802
C. EVERARD
JUNE 1802
HAMELIN'S SEARCH
PORT JACKSON
BOTANY BAY
BASS STRAIT
KING I.
FLINDERS I.
C. BARREN I.
HUNTER Is
NOV. 1802
MAY 1802
TASMANIA
(Van Diemen's
Land)
OYSTER BAY
TASMAN PEN.a
BRUNY I.
S.E. CAPE
JAN. 1802
N
BAUDIN
Main Track of the
Expedition :
Track of the 'NATURALISTE':
100 miles

№ 22

with the British, and for an evaluation of the first part of the voyage. (1) The presence of Flinders, and the opportunity this provided for evaluation, removed whatever illusions the French may have cherished - for it left them the uncontested discoverers of not more than 400 miles of coastline. Henri de Freycinet is reputed to have admitted this in a toast to Flinders. 'Captain,' he said, 'if we had not been kept so long picking up shells and catching butterflies at Van Diemen's Land, you would not have discovered the South Coast before us.' (2) It is the kind of remark that sounds true, and it may have been an indirect gibe at Péron, who was a great and often indiscriminate collector - for Freycinet, the sailor, would have little patience for such landlubbers - but it was less than fair: it was rather the lengthy crossing from France to Port Louis, and the shortage of supplies at the Ile de France, which had enabled Flinders to catch up and precede Baudin.

The three ships sailed on 18 November 1802, making for King Island, at the western extremity of Bass Strait. They anchored there, in Elephant Bay, on 6 December; three days later, Hamelin sailed for France: he was to reach Port Louis on 2 February 1803, and was later to be captured in the Channel, taken to Portsmouth, and only released through the immediate good offices of Sir Joseph Banks, (3) finally arriving at Le Havre on 7 June.

On the day that the Naturaliste sailed, an English ship, the Cumberland, arrived at King Island. It had been despatched there by the anxious British Governor. Baudin had never concealed from the British his intention to examine the northern coast of Tasmania and, in particular, King Island. The strategic importance of this uninhabited island, commanding as it did Bass Strait and the direct route from Europe to Port Jackson, was not being overlooked by the

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(1) Péron's account of Port Jackson and environs will be found in his Voyage aux Terres Australes, vol. I, p. 368-90.
(2) Flinders, A Voyage to Terra Australis, vol. I, p. 193.
(3) Gavin de Beer, The Sciences were never at War, p.121.

British, and the fear of a French settlement there had prompted Governor King to despatch the Cumberland to take possession officially of the island on behalf of the British Crown. The French, it is true, had established a camp there, but purely for scientific purposes, and Baudin was understandably surprised when, with a minimum of tact, the British flag was raised over the tents. (1) The situation was not without its absurd side, for the Cumberland had left in such a hurry that it lacked supplies and even enough gunpowder to fire a musket; the French, glad to repay in some way the earlier hospitality shown to them by the British, gave them food and other supplies, including twelve pounds of gunpowder, whereupon the newcomers proceeded to salute the British flag by firing rifles loaded with French gunpowder. (2)

Though not acrimonious, the correspondence that passed between King and Baudin as a result of this action was couched in stiff terms. King explained that he had received advice that the French intended to establish a settlement somewhere in Tasmania. 'My informant adds that such are the orders that you have received from the Republic; that is what Colonel Paterson told me after your departure, having learned of it himself from a person in your ship.' (3) Although Baudin did not recognise any primary right of the British to Tasmania, he had no intention or instructions to leave a settlement behind at King Island, or anywhere else, whatever ultimate possibilities might result from his discoveries. 'All your work,' the Navy Minister had written to Baudin, 'must aim at the advancement of science; you must observe the strictest neutrality, avoid raising the slightest doubt about your correctness in keeping within the object of your mission, such as is mentioned in the passports that have been handed to you.' (4)

(1) He tersely comments that he thought the Union Jack hanging limply from the branch of a tree was someone's washing left out to dry. Journal, 23 Frimaire, An X.
(2) Baudin, Journal, 18-21 Frimaire, An XI.
(3) Baudin, Journal, 18 Frimaire, An XI (10 Dec. 1802) Paterson was Lieutenant Governor of New South Wales.
(4) Letter of 29 Sept. 1800 quoted by E. Scott, 'Baudin's Voyage of Exploration to Australia, Eng. Historical Review, April 1913, p. 345. See also Scott's Terre Napoléon, pp. 208-9.

Once again, the guilty party was Péron, although Baudin apparently remained unaware of it. In a letter to Decaen, Governor of the Ile de France, the young scientist boasted that 'the commander of the troops in New South Wales, M. Paterson, a member of the Royal Society of London, always treated me with particular regard. I was received in his house, one might say, as a son.' (1) This, there can be little doubt, was Paterson's 'person in your ship' that King was referring to in his letter to Baudin. Thus, Péron was responsible for the incident and, in the long run, for hastening the British settlement of Tasmania.

Although it was an annoyance, and a humiliation, Baudin submitted to the British officer's silent supervision, contenting himself with sending a firm protest to the Governor. Meanwhile, he had to arrange for repairs to the Casuarina, which had been damaged in a storm, and which was making water at the rate of three inches an hour (2) - not the last trouble he was to have with this vessel; he also organised a careful survey of King Island itself, under the charge of Faure, who was probably the first man to circumnavigate it; finally when the Casuarina had been repaired, he despatched Freycinet to the northwest coast of Tasmania and to Hunter Islands.

At the end of December, Baudin sailed to Kangaroo Island, which he wanted to survey in greater detail. The western point of the island was sighted on 2 January 1803; the Géographe then sailed to Nepean Bay, and anchored off Cape Delambre, its eastern headland; while surveys were made in the Casuarina and in the ship's boats. A new longboat was built of local timber to replace one which had been lost at King Island. The coast of Kangaroo Island was charted in a few days. 'On 14 Nivose [5 Jan. 1803] we finished our geographical work on the whole of the island named Kangaroo, (3) so that, if the English have over us the advantage of having arrived a few days earlier, we have over them that of having completely circumnavigated it, and of

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(1) Letter of 11 Dec. 1803, quoted in H.M. Cooper, French Exploration, p. 194.
(2) Freycinet, Voyage, p. 16.
(3) This is one of the rare occasions when he uses Flinders' designation instead of his own Borda Is.

having determined its geographical position in a manner that leaves nothing to be desired for the safety of navigation.' (1) But there remained the problem of the theoretical channel that might divide Australia into two land masses.

Flinders had reported the existence of two large gulfs which bit deep into the land - Spencer and St Vincent. Baudin had instructed Louis de Freycinet who, with the young men De Bocage and Ransonnet, all from the Naturaliste, had charge of the Casuarina, to explore the two gulfs, but to return within twenty days, as water was short. Freycinet, delayed by contrary winds, just failed to keep the rendezvous, and there resulted a new series of misunderstandings, for which Baudin's impatience must bear the blame: on 2 February 1803, the Casuarina was sighted from the Géographe, and seen to be sailing eastwards; Baudin shortened sail to await Freycinet, but the latter continued on his course, and eventually sailed right out of sight. (2) The Géographe went on her way slowly, awaiting the Casuarina if it should turn back - something which Baudin doubted, as he suspected Freycinet of meaning to return to Port Jackson. Freycinet, for his part, accuses Baudin of sailing westwards without making any effort to allow the slower Casuarina to catch up, (3) although his smaller ship altered course almost as soon as the Géographe was in sight. The mystery remains unsolved - unless we are to suspect that Baudin, angry at the return of the Casuarina one day later than had been arranged, had decided to abandon Freycinet to his fate. It is even possible, as Bouvier and Maynial have suggested (4), that he welcomed the opportunity of losing the small vessel, the slowness of which was setting back his plans.

Whatever the reason - and it might have been nothing more than unknown currents, unstable winds and muddled manoeuvres - Baudin

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(1) Baudin, Journal, 13-4 Nivose, An. XI.
(2) 'It is difficult to explain this manoeuvre on the part of citizen Freycinet, and no doubt he will make it clear to us at the first opportunity.' Baudin, Journal, 12 Pluviose, An. XI. When the two met again they simply blamed each other.
(3) Freycinet, Voyage, vol. II, pp. 12-20.
(4) Une Aventure dans les Mers Australes, p. 191.

now sailed to St. Francis Islands, and then due west to King George Sound on the south coast of Western Australia. There, on 18 February, the Casuarina rejoined him. The expedition stayed eleven days here, examining the coast in detail, and replenishing stocks of water, for this is one of the few places on the south-west coast where water can be readily obtained at all times of the year. In a bay nearby, the French found an American ship, its crew hunting for seals. (1) No more reserved than he had been with Flinders, Baudin supplied the American captain with charts and details of the entire south coast of Australia, including, therefore, his own discoveries. (2) Once again, this was not the action of a man on a secret political mission.

On 1 March 1803, the Géographe and the Casuarina sailed from King George Sound. Baudin had given Freycinet sealed orders to be opened in case they should again become separated. The Casuarina in such an eventuality was to proceed to the Ile de France. On 6 March, the Casuarina, sent to survey an opening in the coast, was hidden in a bank of fog; this gave Baudin an excuse to complain that Freycinet would no doubt seize the opportunity to sail for home. But he underestimated his officer's reliability and courage, for Freycinet did not consider the two ships finally separated, and he sailed to Rottnest Island, where he rejoined the other vessel. On his way there, Baudin had examined Port Leschenault Inlet to the north of Bunbury, Geographe Bay. (3)

Baudin and Freycinet left Rottnest Island practically at once, and proceeded to Shark Bay, where they anchored on the evening of 16 March. Freycinet was sent to sound the northern waters of the bay, around the mouth of the Gascoyne river, (4) while Péron went ashore, collecting shells and endeavouring to contact the unfriendly natives, and again got himself lost, causing Baudin once more to curse the young scientists. (5)

(1) Freycinet, Voyage, p.22.
(2) Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 168.
(3) Freycinet, Voyage, p. 22.
(4) Ibid., p.23.
(5) Péron, Voyage, vol. 11, pp. 120-2.

On March 1803, the expedition weighed anchor, and from North West Cape began anew the exploration of the northern coast of Western Australia. The Casuarina this time enabled the French to explore the labyrinth of islands and passes, which had proved too dangerous in 1801, and to get near an inhospitable shore which no navigator had so far been able to chart with any semblance of accuracy. (1) This work was not achieved without danger: on 2 April, the Géographe nearly grounded on Banc des Antiphones, north of Condon Creek - the second near-disaster in the space of a week. (2) On 24 April, off Cassini Island, the Géographe's boat was despatched to explore the island, which had never been properly surveyed; nearby, she found twenty-six Malay boats fishing for trepang off Holothuria Banks. (3) It was from here that Baudin had sailed for Timor in 1801; he decided to do so once again, before undertaking his final task - the exploration of the Arnhem Land coast and of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Géographe and the Casuarina sailed from Australia on the last day of April and arrived at Kupang six days later.

The French spent nearly a month in the Dutch port, where, so they learned, Flinders, still in the Investigator, had spent some time during the previous month. (4) On 14 May, a sail was seen outside the harbour, and the slow and pointless manoeuvres of the ship showed the vessel was in trouble; the French rowed out to her aid, and found the Hunter, an American trading ship, with her crew so weakened by dysentery that only three men could still stand. Kupang was really no place for sick men, and the Hunter was later abandoned. (5) Nor was Baudin particularly desirous himself of prolonging his stay here, for many of his men were weak after nearly three years of hardship and bad food. Six men had already deserted, and, although four were recovered, Baudin left the other two to their fate, unwilling

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(1) Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 169.
(2) Péron, Voyage, vol. II, p. 233, pp. 236-7.
(3) Freycinet, Voyage, p. 24.
(4) Péron, Voyage, vol. II, p. 256.
(5) Ibid., vol. II, pp. 259-60.

to waste any more time. Leschenault, the botanist, was too weak to sail, and he also had to be left behind; the astronomer Bernier did sail, but died soon after.

The two ships sailed out of Kupang on the morning of 3 June; the Australian coast - the northernmost shores of western Australia - was sighted on 12 June. Winds in this region made progress difficult, and to many the task seemed impossible, but Baudin refused to give up; he drove his wasting body as hard as he drove his men. He remained fixed in his earlier determination.

'I decided, upon leaving Timor, to take up again the work on the north coast of New Holland, although several sailors whom I had consulted were persuaded that it would be impossible to travel eastwards in the face of the south-east monsoon.' (1)

Painfully, the ships worked their way into Joseph Bonaparte Gulf. It was not possible, however, to carry out a thorough survey, although a number of points were fixed, namely Cape Rulhières, Mount Casuarina, Lacrosse Island and Péron Island. Clarence Strait was not explored, and the French sailed north to Cape Fourcroy, which is the south-west point of Bathurst Island; Baudin then veered east towards the northern coast of Arnhem Land, but the monsoon proved too much of an obstacle. Having reached Cape Van Diemen, on Melville Island, he decided to give up his attempt to fight the winds, and sailed for Cape Walsh, in New Guinea, intending to go from there in a south easterly direction back to Arnhem Land. It was 28 June, the sea was rough, and the small Casuarina forced the Géographe to slow down considerably. Nine days later, on 7 July, the two vessels were still 175 miles from New Guinea. There were practically no medical stores left to help the increasing number of sick; there was only a month's supply of biscuit, providing the ration of 10 ounces a day was maintained; there was water for only two months, and some of it was going bad already. This water shortage was made more acute by the presence on board of precious live animals for French zoos, among them emus, kangaroos, cassowaries; and of many

(1) Baudin, Journal, 14 Prairial, An XI; see also Péron, Voyage de Découvertes, vol. II, p. 252.

rare plants and shrubs. Above all, the crew was weakened and emaciated to such an extent that the handling of the ship was becoming impossible, and Baudin himself had suffered a haemorrhage. On 7 July, he could go no further and gave instructions to turn back. When the rumour spread that Baudin had set a course for the Ile de France, and that they were going home, the men were so incredulous that they came up on to the bridge throughout the night to look at the compass. (1)

Baudin's journal, taken up again after his recovery from his earlier illness, ends abruptly on 5 August 1803. Two days later, the Géographe reached the Ile de France. The Casuarina arrived on 12 August; the crew was paid off on the 29th and transferred to the Géographe. On 16 September, Baudin died.

Millius, the former second-in-command of the Naturaliste, who had been left behind on account of ill-health, rejoined the expedition, and took over command of the Géographe, taking the ship back to France, where she arrived on 24 March 1804, after an absence of nearly three and a half years. Of the original sixty officers and savants who had sailed from Le Havre in 1800, only thirty-two completed the voyage as far as Mauritius - and two of these, Baudin and Depuch the mineralogist, died on the island. Péron himself was to die within a few years.

Without doubt, Baudin had died a disappointed and embittered man, for so much of his time had been wasted in disputes and petty vexations. Illness and shortage of supplies had prevented him from completing his work with the thoroughness he would have wished. That Flinders had preceded him on the southern coast of Australia must have added to his disappointment, although he does not say so in so many words in his journal. Yet, because of the difficulties under which he laboured, his achievements deserve the highest praise: he rejected all the excuses - unchallengeable, most of them - that offered themselves to him, and he continued his voyage in spite of everything, driven

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(1) J.P.Faivre, Expansion Française, p.173. 'On the journey home, Baudin was no more than the shadow of a captain on a ghost ship', Bouvier & Maynial, Une Aventure dans les Mers Australes, p.210.

by his inexorable will. But, even with Flinders ahead of him, his expedition brought back a wealth of geographical details - the newly-charted bays, capes, and carefully surveyed islands. In addition, because Flinders was kept prisoner in Mauritius, the French were able to give the world, in 1807, the first detailed and complete map of the Australian continent. To this must be added the anthropological work of Péron, the drawings and reports of the botanists and zoologists, and the truly astonishing cargo brought back by the Naturaliste and the Géographe:

'Apart from a multitude of cases of minerals, of dried plants, of shells, of fishes, of reptiles and zoophytes preserved in alcohol, of quadrupeds and birds stuffed or dissected, we still had seventy great cases full of plants in their natural state, comprising nearly two hundred different species of useful plants, approximately six hundred types of seeds contained in several thousand small bags and, finally, about a hundred living animals, rare or absolutely new.' (1)

The animal included two kangaroos which were presented to the Empress, together with a mass of artifacts now lost; (2) the plants included 210 trees, most of which found their way to the botanical gardens. It was the most important collection of zoological and botanical specimens ever received by the administrators of the Museum. (3)

The importance of the expedition was recognised - its value was, perhaps, a little over-stressed on account of the possibilities it offered as propaganda, and of the liberal use of bonapartist names made by Péron and Freycinet. Membership of it became a valuable reference. Possibly sheer survival alone indicated an innate resistance and an adaptability to difficult conditions on the part of the officers and

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(1) Péron, Voyage de Découvertes, vol.II, p. 313.
(2) Faivre, Expansion Française, p.176.
(3) Ibid., p.175. See also Bouvier and Maynial's judgment, 'By its new discoveries in the realm of the natural sciences... the Baudin expedition occupies an eminent position in the history of great explorations', in Une Aventure aux Mers Australes, p. 215.

scientists who came back. Milius and Freycinet both achieved in time the governorship of the island of Bourbon, the main French possession in the Mascareignes after the fall of the Ile de France; the young aspirant Duval d'Ailly also obtained this position; two other aspirants, Peureux de Meslay and Brue, became respectively governors of Pondicherry, and of St Pierre and Miquelon; Charles Baudin - no relation of the captain's - ended his career as an admiral, and Bougainville the younger, who had served as an aspirant in the Géographe, soon obtained his own command.

But to the dead, fate was less kind. Péron was entrusted with the task of writing the official account of the expedition, a mission he carried out in a spirit of partisanship which only his death, and his supercession by de Freycinet, tempered when the second volume appeared. This, and the Franco-British bitterness that resulted from Péron and Freycinet's claims, covered Baudin's memory with an opprobium which has only been lifted in the last half-century. (1)

When Péron's volume appeared, the south coast of Australia - Terre Napoléon - showed a purely French nomenclature, based to a large extent on the names of scientists and of the Imperial family. Flinders' Kangaroo Island was no longer even Borda Island - in itself a questionable appellation - but bore the name of Decrès, Minister of the Navy from 1801; Spencer Gulf had become Bonaparte Gulf, and St Vincent's was Josephine Gulf. Yet, since the French had spent five months at Port Jackson, they were fully aware of the British contribution to the knowledge of the coastline which now appeared as 'Terre Napoléon'. (2) Rivalry and patriotism, at a

(1) The work of rehabilitation was begun by Professor Ernest Scott. In the mid-nineteenth century, it was still possible for a biographer of Péron, in a volume that is admittedly hagiographic, to write that the expedition faced 'privations which the sordid avarice of Captain Baudin was to inflict on brave men who remained faithful to their mission.' See L. Audiat, François Péron, 1855, p. 34.

(2) See E. Scott, Terre Napoléon, pp. 68-9; J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 150; M. Flinders, A Voyage to Terra Australis, pp. 192-3.

time when the two nations were at war, account in part for the erasure of names given by Flinders and Grant; a lesser excuse is the desire on the part of Péron and Freycinet to ingratiate themselves further into the favour of the Emperor, who, by that time, was no longer immune to the grosser forms of flattery, but this eventually redounded to Freycinet's disadvantage, when he continued the publication of the account under the Restoration:

'I should have liked to change a nomenclature, which the present political and moral situation of France and of Europe now rejects, but the first volume had already been in the trade for some years.' (1)

To the British this specious excuse soothed no wounds, for Flinders had been imprisoned in Mauritius from 1803 to 1810; his journals had been in French possession, and the inference could too easily be made that the Baudin expedition had really discovered very little, and that the information appearing in the French volumes came from Flinders' manuscripts. The publication of Flinders' A Voyage to Terra Australis in 1814 strengthened this belief, and discredited Péron - and therefore Baudin - in the eyes of non-French geographers. The task of rehabilitation was a slow one, and it was due to a growing interest on the part of the Australians themselves in their early history. Scott, in 1910, expressed doubt that Péron and Freycinet had access to any of Flinders' journals - Baudin, of course, had died before Flinders arrived at the Ile de France - and there is no real evidence that Decaen (2) had ever communicated information obtained from Flinders to the two compilers.

'The third log book was the only document pertaining to Flinders' discoveries that Decaen ever had in his possession. It was never

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(1) Freycinet, Voyage, Introduction, p. VIII. It should be remembered that the Napoleonic names given to Australian features replaced Baudin's names as well as Flinders'.

(2) Decaen (1769-1832) was the last governor of the Ile de France. Whatever hopes he may have had of attacking Port Jackson, he never had the means of carrying out a campaign of this size.

returned. The rightful owner never saw it again. It has never been produced.' (1)

But this log book did not concern the period of French exploration in Australia, and therefore could not have been of much use to Péron, When Baudin's journals came to light, the achievements of the Frenchmen, and of Flinders, were put into proper perspective, and the party political gloss of the Napoleonic nomenclature stood revealed.

It was an episode discreditable to those who were responsible for it, and one which, unfortunately, has assumed too much importance. It has obscured for far too long the true achievements of the Baudin expedition.

Thus, with Baudin, in misery and acrimony, ended a chapter of French Pacific adventures. Baudin's voyage was the last in a series of tragic, often glorious, and sometimes incompetent expeditions. With the nineteenth century, Pacific exploration was to become subordinate to the new aims of territorial expansion and of political influence.

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(1) E. Scott, Terre Napoléon, p. 69. However, Decrès wrote to Admiral Rosily on 10 Jan. 1814: 'Here is a journal of Capt. Flinders, which had remained in the hands of General de Caen, and which has just been handed to me, after having been several times asked for by the English. I should be obliged if, before sending it, you will examine it, and extract everything that might be of interest. It might be advisable to transmit it to Captain Freycinet.' S. Hy.M.Cn. 102-35. (Copy in Mitchell Library.)

PART THREE

A NINETEENTH CENTURY EPILOGUE

During the Napoleonic Wars, the French were naturally prevented by the British mastery of the sea from continuing their work of exploration, although short scientific voyages did take place within restricted limits - notably Beautemps-Beaupré's hydrographic surveys - and the tradition of French scientific research remained unimpaired and gave rise, in time, to the voyages of Captain Gautier, who charted the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and of Roussin who surveyed the African and Brazilian coasts.

The still insecure government of Louis XVIII had little opportunity of organising and financing a major expedition during its first years, but the carefully-hoarded plans of scientists and geographers were soon dusted and sent to the new ministers. The impulse given by the great voyages of the eighteenth century had grown into a tradition to which were now added new national ambitions. For a quarter of a century, France had led Europe, firstly with advanced political reforms that sowed the seeds of innumerable other revolutions, later as a conqueror on a hitherto unparalleled scale; national pride called for activities, now inevitably of a peaceful nature, that would help to retain France's position as a great European power. This explains why, within a remarkably short time and in spite of economic chaos (1), the French flag was again flying over Pacific waters.

Even so, it was a trading expedition that was first off the mark. The Bordeaux firm of Balguerie, in the hope that the North West Coast of America might still prove profitable to fur traders, despatched the Bordelais, a vessel of 200 tons, with a total complement of thirty-four men, under the command of Camille de Roquefeuil. Government support was readily forthcoming, since the voyage could help to widen the knowledge of navigation and to make new discoveries. (2) Not only that, but Roquefeuil could make a rapid and invaluable survey

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(1) 'In 1814 our ports were ruined, our shipowners discouraged, our trade had disappeared from the high seas',- J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 226. 'The maritime commerce of France, almost annihilated by the Revolution, by the wars and by the errors which survived it, was at the time of the second Restoration confined within very narrow limits.'- Camille de Roquefeuil, A Voyage round the World between the Years 1816-1819, p. 3.

(2) J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 227.

of trade conditions in regions that had been long closed to French shipping - and particularly in the South American republics which were then shaking off Spanish rule. (1)

The Bordelais left on October 1816, turned Cape Horn without incident, and spent three months at Callao before proceeding to San Francisco. Roquefeuil thus became the first French captain to anchor in the Bay. (2) Although furs were still available around Nootka Sound, they found the sandalwood trade, based on the Marquesas, far more profitable. In 1818, the Bordelais returned to the Alaskan coast and, finally, in February 1819, sailed across the Pacific for Macao, reaching the estuary of the Gironde in November.

The results to French trade were considerable, for the voyage proved that the Pacific was offering new opportunities to enterprising captains and that the dangers of the previous century were fast vanishing as more ships sailed the Ocean.

By then, a major scientific expedition, under none other than Louis de Freycinet, was sailing the Pacific in the Uranie. Freycinet had learned his lesson from Baudin - there were very few savants on board to cause disruption; there was, too, a distant link with an earlier expedition - Labiche, the second Lieutenant, was the nephew of Blondela who had sailed to his death with La Pérouse.

Freycinet left Toulon in August, 1817; on board was an attractive sailor who turned out to be Madame de Freycinet - the Gallic tradition on Pacific voyages was to be maintained. (3) The governor of Gibraltar, however, while prepared to admit of the

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(1) The Chilean Revolution actually broke out while the Bordelais was at Valparaiso. The disorders in the South American states were observed by the French, who witnessed the flight of the Spanish troops from San Martin's forces, 'the officers generally preceding the soldiers'.-Roquefeuil, Voyage, p. 10.

(2) J.P. Faivre, op. cit., p. 228.

(3) She was determined to care for her husband's health. J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 265; J.E.V. Arago, Promenade autour du Monde, vol. III, p. 4.

presence of a lady on a French Royal Naval ship, was shocked by her male attire, so that henceforth she dressed in a more becoming manner; Freycinet, more fortunate than others before him, escaped disciplinary measures when he returned to France.

After spending two months at Rio de Janeiro, the Uranie sailed down to the Cape of Good Hope and thence to Mauritius which, sadly, was no longer a French outpost but a British possession. It was the first official visit of a French ship to the island since it had changed hands, and Freycinet was glad to be able to report that the British had kept their undertaking to respect French traditions and culture. From Port Louis, Freycinet sailed to Shark Bay which he had explored under Baudin; on the deserted shores of Dirk Hartog Island, he searched for the plaque commemmorating the Dutchman's voyage of 1616 and Vlamingh's visit of 1697; it was not easy to find and, in the belief that it would sooner or later get lost on the lonely island, he decided to take it back to France (1) - an unfortunate act, since it has since disappeared. (2)

Again he followed Baudin's route and sailed north to Kupang, which he reached in October 1818 with the inevitable result of an epidemic of dysentery. Going north to New Guinea and the Marianas, and thence to Guam, he crossed the Northern Pacific and anchored at Hawaii in August 1819. He then made his way back to Australia, spending three months in Port Jackson, which amazed him by the development that had taken place in the fifteen years since his last visit.

The Uranie sailed away on Christmas Day 1819, passed to the south of New Zealand - sighting the southerly speck of Campbell Island - and turned Cape Horn, only to be wrecked off the Falkland Islands in February 1820.

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(1) Freycinet, Voyage autour du Monde, vol. I p. 449.
(2) G.A. Wood, The Discovery of Australia, p. 229.

The ship was lost, and the French camped uncomfortably on a bleak island before they succeeded in attracting the attention of American ships seal-hunting in the Falkland group. Undaunted by his setback, Freycinet bought one of them, (1) renamed it the Physicienne, loaded what he had saved out of his stores and collections, and made for Montevideo. On 13 November 1820, he arrived at Le Havre. An enquiry was then held in the shipwreck of the Uranie; it was shown that she had struck an uncharted submerged rock, and Freycinet was exonerated from all blame. (2)

His success was well-deserved. With a thoroughness inherited from Baudin's expedition, Freycinet unloaded a formidable array of specimens. Although eighteen cases had been lost in the Falklands, and the live animals - black swans, emus and others - had died in the cold latitudes, there still remained twenty-five mammals, three hundred and thirteen birds, forty-five reptiles, one hundred and forty-six fish, innumerable shells and thirty skeletons - including one of a male Papuan. (3) There were thirteen hundred insects, forty of them unknown species from Papua, and three thousand botanical specimens of which nearly five hundred were new to the Museum's collection and twenty totally unknown to science. Rock samples numbered nine hundred, and the drawings of Jacques Arago and of the scientifically-minded officers totalled five hundred.

The charts, mostly the work of Duperrey, added to the knowledge of the Pacific, but there were by now few discoveries still to be made, although one small island, which he called Rose Island, after Madame de Freycinet, was re-discovered east of Samoa. (4)

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(1) The Mercury. It was actually flying the Argentine rebel flag.

(2) Freycinet, Voyage, p. 1253.

(3) 'With the exception of Baudin's ... no naval expedition has ever been so profitable to zoology.'- 'Report to the Academy of Sciences', Voyage, p. XXXV.

(4) It had, however, been discovered by Roggeween in 1722 and named Vuyle Eylandt. Sharp, The Discovery of the Pacific Islands, p. 99.

The account of his voyage, which appeared between 1824 and 1839, was in keeping with the material brought back, for with Freycinet we enter the era of encyclopaedic reports and monumental compilations. Indeed, it can be said that, as the voyages decrease in importance, their accounts increase in volume. Although subject to flights of rhetorical fancy and unfortunate purple patches, (1) Freycinet's reports are as valuable as they are exhaustive. (2)

Encouraged by the success of the Uranie expedition, the French government despatched in August 1822 the Coquille, a three-masted vessel with a comparatively shallow draught which had been constructed in 1811 as a transport for horses; it was to be used for many years to come in the Pacific. (3) De Rossel and Beautemps-Beaupré had advised the already experienced commander, Duperrey, who had himself views on what work remained to be done. (4)

Sailing round the Horn in December, the Coquille called at Concepcion and Callao, leaving from Payta for Tahiti. Before reaching Matavai Bay on May 3rd, the French had discovered Clermont-Tonnerre Island (5) and Lostange Island. (6) They went on to Santa Cruz and to the Solomons, finding the natives friendly and peaceful. They

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(1) e.g. 'How many unhappy travellers, roaming like blind men over an unknown element, exposed without protection to all the fury of the storms, became victims of their inexperience and of their daring, and paid with an obscure death their first attempts.' — Voyage, p. 2.

(2) An account of Brazil fills 300 pages, of Timor 200, of the Marianas 350, of Australia 558. It is still possible to find copies of Voyage autour du Monde in public libraries today with the pages uncut - a stern judgment on garrulity.

(3) Notes on the Astrolabe by vice-admiral Paris in Société de Géographie, Bulletin, Edition du Centenaire de la mort de la Pérouse, pp. 190-191.

(4) Louis-Isidore Duperrey at 58 was comparatively elderly, but he was fit and vigorous, and died at the ripe age of 97.

(5) Clermont-Tonnerre was then Minister of the Navy. The island is now known as Reao and forms part of the Tuamotus.

(6) Nengo Nengo Atoll, probably identical with Wallis' Prince William-Henry Island.

continued to Waigiou Island where they discovered a bay to the south of Offak Harbour, which they named Crousol Bay.(1) In great need of supplies, they managed - though not without difficulty - to obtain some from the Dutch at Caieli. From Amboyna, they sailed down in a mighty curve around Australia to Tasmania and to the by now regular port of call, Port Jackson.

After leaving Australia, they spent a fortnight in New Zealand - the first French expedition to land there since the murder of Marion du Fresne. Civilisation was spreading to these far corners of the Pacific, for they met there white settlers and also Hongi, the Maori warrior who had met King George III in England. In mid-April 1824, they sailed to the Carolines; on June 18th they discovered in the eastern Carolines three uncharted islets which they named Duperrey Islands; (2) a few days later they sighted another further to the north-east - D'Urville Island. (3) Soon after, they altered course, passed through the Dutch East Indies, and arrived at Mauritius at the beginning of October. In neighbouring Bourbon Island, the governor, Henri de Freycinet, welcomed them as fellow Pacific navigators. On 24 March 1825, the Coquille reached Marseilles.

The voyage of the Coquille was as successful as the Uranie's had been and brought back comparable quantities of specimens of all kinds: Three hundred geological samples collected by the naturalist Lesson, eleven hundred insects collected by Dumont d'Urville, 'of which four hundred and fifty belonged to species lacking in the Museum's collection and three hundred were not mentioned in any published work.' (4) D'Urville, whose energy has seldom been equalled, also supervised the gathering of some three thousand botanical specimens. A somewhat new science - anthropology - was being catered for by a systematic study

(1) Crousol was a later Minister of the Navy, under whose administration the account of the voyage was written.
(2) Mokil Atoll, Sharp, The Discovery of the Pacific Islands, p. 202.
(3) Losap-Nama, ibid., p. 203.
(4) 'Rapport fait à l'Académie Royale des Sciences', in Voyage autour du Monde pendant les années 1822, 1823, 1824 et 1825, by L.I. Duperrey, p. xl.

of Pacific islanders, which would, it was hoped, reveal whether the Polynesians belonged the a single ethnic group or to several. (1)

From the point of view of naval hygiene, the voyage had proved valuable - after thirty-one and a half months, after travelling 25,000 leagues, there was not a single death to report, practically no sickness, and no damage to the sturdy ship; (2) it seemed as if death, which had lain in wait for so many Frenchmen between de Surville and Baudin, was at last relenting. The advances in medical science and in hygiene, greater attention to the comfort and health of the crew and, above all, d'Appert's system of canning food, were finally beating back the threat of scurvy.

In only one respect did Duperrey fail. He had been asked to investigate the possibility of settling a French colony in Western Australia. (3) It was, at best, a forlorn hope, for the British would have been quick to lay claim to the deserted land towards which they were already casting eyes. (4) Duperry's excuse - that unfavourable winds would have delayed him had he attempted to land on a coast which, anyhow, Frenchmen had already surveyed in detail - was accepted. Expension, if it was to come, must seek the unclaimed islands of the Pacific itself - New Zealand, ever-appealing Tahiti, or the tiny Marquesas.

But no colonisation can succeed without some kind of commercial activity to link the colonial settlement to the mother country - and trade in the Pacific was still haphazard and followed as yet no broad discernible pattern. The task of investigating the possibilities of regular commerce in what had once been the Southern Ocean and in South East Asia was left to the bearer of a famous name, Hyacinthe de Bougainville, son of the pioneer navigator. The plan, drawn up in 1823,

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(1) J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 243.
(2) 'Rapport sur le Voyage de Découvertes' , by the Institut de France, in Duperrey's Voyage, p. 4.
(3) J.P. Faivre, op. cit., p. 245.
(4) A first settlement was established by the British in 1825.

provided for the first time in the post-war period for two ships - the Thétis, (1) with 44 guns and a complement of 320 officers and men, and the Espérance, of 20 guns with a complement of 163, commanded by M. de Camper, who had already sailed on a goodwill mission to the East on the Cléopâtre in 1821. (2)

They were setting out on neither a voyage of discovery nor a campaign of exploration (3) but on a circumnavigation, in the course of which a few hydrographical problems were to be solved, the name of France and her reborn power blazoned, and French trade fostered.

The Thétis sailed from Brest on 2 March 1824, the Espérance having left a few days earlier. The two ships rejoined at Bourbon, now the main French base in the Indian Ocean, though a less satisfactory one than the Ile de France had been. The island, which had played second fiddle for so long in the Mascareignes, was now enjoying its share of prosperity - there were twenty-five ships anchored in the harbour, a symbol of France's recovery in that overseas trade which Bougainville was commissioned to strengthen yet further. From Bourbon, they went on to Pondicherry, and thence to Singapore, which was then rapidly developing into a major port under the guidance of Stamford Raffles.

At Manila, the Espérance was damaged by a typhoon, and Bougainville decided to proceed alone to Indo-china, where he was required to obtain an audience with the Emperor. Chaigneau, the French consul,

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(1) The Thétis had been intended for a voyage of exploration in 1822, but this project had been delayed.

(2) Three French goodwill missions were sent out after the wars to renew contacts in the East; the Golo, under Dambart de Lansmastre, made a brief visit to India in February, 1817; the Cybèle, under de Kergariou, went to Cochinchina in the same year; the Cléopatre, under de Courson visited China, Cochinchina and Madagascar in 1821. Bougainville himself had sailed with de Kergariou. See on this C.P.T. Laplace, Voyage autour du Monde, vol. I, pp. IV/V.

(3) Bougainville, Journal de la Navigation autour du Globe de la Frégate La Thétis et de la Corvette L'Espérance, vol. I. p. 23.

was unfortunately absent in Saigon when the Thétis arrived at Tourane, so that Bougainville was put off by the mandarins who declared that no one was able or empowered to translate Louis XVIII's letter; there was nothing to be done in the face of such passive resistance on the part of the court officials. Bougainville obtained a message from the emperor to the effect that French vessels would always be welcome to visit his territories and left, on 17 February 1825, to explore the little known Anambas. (1)

There, a few names could be added to the charts - l'Ile de la Thétis, le Banc de l'Espérance, Port de Clermont-Tonnerre, Ile de Bougainville. On March 20th the French reached Surabaya, where they learned of the death of Louis XVIII. Dysentery soon made its appearance and they left at once to avoid its ravages. Like others before him, Bougainville sailed west of Australia in a wide sweep to Tasmania, rejoicing that the colder latitudes were killing off the 'prodigious quantities of cockroaches' that had been plaguing them since their navigation of Indonesian waters. Struck by a storm as he prepared to enter D'Entrecasteaux Channel, he was forced to abandon his plan of anchoring in the Derwent River, and proceeded instead to Port Jackson, by now a flourishing settlement in that 'Australia which, God and our thoughtlessness helping, [Britain] will end by occupying in its entirety.' (2) He consoled himself by erecting a monument to La Pérouse, and left on September 21st, sailing north-east, passing to the north of New Zealand and out of sight of the coast. His instructions gave him

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(1) An island group between Malaya and Borneo. Bougainville's Journal is far less ponderous and voluminous than the accounts of his two predecessors, and flashes of his father's urbane wit are frequent. The stiff etiquette of the Cochin-Chinese court officials, however, exasperated him: he comments that the military escort reminded him of dressed-up monkeys, and that the envoys themselves, although splendidly dressed, were 'covered with vermin and so disgustingly dirty that M. de Camper and I were more than once forced to avert our eyes when we were in their presence.' Vol. I, p. 277.

(2) Bougainville, Journal, vol. I, p. 455.

the option of returning by either the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn; he chose the latter so that he could claim to have circumnavigated the world, although in a direction opposite to that taken by his father.

His aim was to call at Pitcairn and Easter Islands, but winds hampered him, progress was slow, and he decided wearily to make for Valparaiso. On 23 November 1825, after sixty-three days 'without having met with anything whatsoever ... this long and monotonous navigation of two thousand leagues ended.' (1)

After struggling around Cape Horn, he was foiled in his final wish - calling at the Falkland Islands as a pilgrimage to his father's settlement. Fog delayed him for so long that he decided to forsake this call 'which had no interest for anyone except myself.' On 23 June, 1826, he arrived back in France after a voyage that is worthy of notice mainly for its length, and for the pleasant personality of the man in command. The Pacific was now a main seaway over which trading interests and national ambitions were fanning out, and the gentlemanly trail-blazing of the first Bougainville was now as outdated as the heroic muddling of de Surville.

It was possible, for instance, for France to station naval units off the once-exclusive coast of South America and to send them, at will, to various parts of the Pacific. Typical is the voyage of the Bayonnaise, under Léogarant de Tromelin, which sailed from Callao in February 1828 for Hawaii, where there was just a possibility that French influence and trading ventures could, in time, transform the Sandwich group into a French protectorate. In April, after nearly a month at the islands, the Bayonnaise was sent to Vanikoro in the rather unkind hope that it might forestall Peter Dillon. (2) Tromelin failed to anticipate either the Irishman or Dumont d'Urville, but he obtained a few details about the disaster, and added a plaque

(1) Ibid., vo. I, p. 557.
(2) J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 261.

to the monument erected by d'Urville. He then returned to France by Guam, Timor and Bourbon.

Before dealing with Dumont d'Urville - with whom the exploration of the Pacific by French expeditions comes to a close - the voyages of Laplace, of Vaillant and of Dupetit-Thouars must be mentioned, for they illustrate the new concept of Pacific voyages and the radical changes that had taken place since the end of the eighteenth century.

Laplace (1) was instructed to proceed to Tourane in order to reinforce Chaigneau's attempt to preserve French power in Cochin-China, but he was given the choice of returning to France via the Cape, or to complete the circumnavigation by sailing across the Pacific; this fairly generous option, also accorded to Bougainville, indicates the lessening importance of Pacific travel, which was by now no longer an objective in itself but merely a convenient way home. Far more important was the task of obtaining commercial information on the ports visited - no longer the strength of garrisons, the loyalty of the natives or the number of guns, which Louis XIV wanted, but customs and harbour regulations, conditions of entry for French and European goods, the types of manufactures most likely to find a market, local goods that could be obtained in barter, the time of the year most suitable for trading operations. (2) Any scientific work, including the hydrographic research suggested by the ageing Beautemps-Beaupré, was to remain 'absolutely secondary to the execution of the mission'.

The trade goods, which not many years before would have consisted of trinkets, coloured beads and mirrors, were now of an entirely different category; 'clocks, watches, articles of jewellery, porcelain, crystal and other products of French manufacture that it was desirable to make known in far-away countries' - in other words, commercial

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(1) Cyrille Pierre Théodore Laplace, (1793/1875) had, inter alia, the distinction of having been born at sea.

(2) Laplace, Voyage autour du Monde par les Mers de l'Inde et de la Chine, Instructions, vol. I, p. XIII.

samples distributed to local dignitaries and merchants for prestige as much as for trade.

Laplace's Favorite was a brand-new ship of 250 tons, carrying 24 guns and a crew of 165, which had made a trial cruise to Sardinia and proved satisfactory for the long voyage. After being delayed by the Greek insurrection and the possibility of direct French intervention, the Favorite sailed on 30 December 1829. By May, they had called at Mauritius and Bourbon, and were making for Pondicherry; at the end of June, on the way to the French settlement of Yanaon, Laplace hugged the coast too closely and grounded his ship on a mudbank from which, with no serious damage, he extricated himself a week later. His diplomatic mission was more successful, in Canton, where the Chinese authorities welcomed the French as a possible counter to growing British power in the East, than in Cochin-China, where the mandarins, amazed at the quantities of stores the Favorite was loading, suspected that a large army lay concealed in her hold, and, in consequence, proved even less cooperative than they had been with Bougainville.

From Tourane, he followed much the same route as the Thétis and the Espérance had taken five years aarlier - via the Anambas to Surabaya. There he was faced with a problem similar to the one that Bougainville had met five years earlier - a new king of France; in Laplace's case the change resulted not from the death of a ruler, but from a revolution. The Bourbons had been overthrown by the July Revolution which had brought Louis Philippe to the throne, an upheaval that was by no means kindly regarded by other European governments. Revolutions being less permanent than deaths, Laplace found himself faced with the difficulty of discovering, on the limited information available to a foreigner in the Dutch East Indies, whether it was safe for him to declare his support for the July monarchy, or whether a counter-revolution was likely to return Charles X to the throne before the Favorite reached France; there was no possibility of equivocating, for the revolution had also overthrown the Bourbon flag. After some hesitation, he decided to fly the tricolour, and entered Surabaya.

Politically, this was a sound decision, but it did not gain him the sympathy of the Dutch merchants who believed that a European war, involving the new French government, was inevitable. It was only when British merchants came forward to accept his bills that he was able to obtain the food and refreshments he needed so badly. Surabaya itself, however, was no kinder to him than it had been towards previous French visitors; the weather was bad and the ships took away with them the germs of dysentery. When they reached Hobart in the middle of 1831, alarge number of sick had to be sent to the local hospital.

From Australia, the Favorite sailed to New Zealand, a country of which the French, remembering the misfortunes of Marion dufresne, were still not fond. Times, however, were changing; no canoes came out to them from the coast of Northland, contrary to what they had been led to expect - this they ascribed to the depopulation of the north following inter-tribal wars; at Kororareka, not far from Marion Bay, where they stayed a week, they got to know the Maoris, and to discount the lurid reports of earlier voyagers. By November, they had crossed the Pacific and reached Valparaiso. On 21 April 1832, they sailed into Toulon harbour, after a circumnavigation lasting twenty-eight months, and costing the lives of twenty men.

Within the fairly narrow limits of his mission, Laplace had been successful; the merchants, whose hour had come with the reign of Louis Philippe, had every reason to be satisfied with him - and he was able to throw in for good measure a reasonable contribution to the zoological and botanical sciences. (1)

Laplace was sent on a similar mission less than five years later on the Artémise, a ship of 52 guns. (2) Although some attention was

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(1) The results make up Volume V of his Voyage autour du Monde.
(2) The account was published between 1841 and 1854 under the title Campagne de Circumnavigation de la frégate l'Artémise pendant les années 1837, 1838, 1839 et 1840 sous le commandement de M. Laplace.

paid to hydrography, the main problems were political ones; the collapse of French influence in Cochin-China appeared final, a denominational struggle was in progress in Tahiti, French influence in Hawaii needed strengthening and the masters of French whalers required help to maintain discipline on their ships. Except in Cochin-China, Laplace was completely successful; the voyage was not, however, as untroubled as Laplace's competent account would indicate, for thirty-six men died, seven had to be left behind at vaious ports on account of ill-health, and nineteen deserted.

Auguste Nicolas Vaillant had left Toulon in February 1836 on the Bonite, a corvette of 800 tons. As in the case of Laplace, the aim was to protect French trade in places where it had become established, to obtain commercial information, and to prepare the ground for French merchants where it had not, and to bring back such geographical and scientific data as circumstances permitted. To these aims was added the strengthening of discipline on whaling ships, a service which Vaillant was able to render to the captain of the Narval as soon as he arrived at Valparaiso. (1) From South America, the Bonite went on to Hawaii, thence across the Pacific to Manila and down to Tourane, where the Indochinese were now so frankly hostile that even a landing was impossible:

'The two banks of the river were covered with soldiers, as if it was a matter of opposing an armed attack. Two great barges armed with small cannons were stationed in the river to stop any boat that might have wished to sail upstream beyond the town.' (2)

There was nothing for it but to sail to Pondicherry and home by way of Bourbon and St Helena, where the French made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Emperor; in 'this now sacred place ... they bowed their heads before the revered tomb.' (3) They reached Brest on 6 November

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(1) The three aims - trade protection, scientific research and the assistance to whaling ships - combined to a lesser or greater degree in all the expeditions of the 1830's except Dumont d'Urville's. See J.P.Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 411.

(2) Vaillant, Voyage autour du Monde exécuté pendant les années 1836 et 1837 par la corvette La Bonite, vol. III, p. 268.

(3) Ibid., vol. III, p. 494. Volume III, however, was published in 1852-under Napoleon III.

1837, with no loss of life to report, but with so many cases of scurvy that the ship's hospital had insufficient room to accommodate them all - a rare occurrence at the time, because civilisation was multiplying her outposts and science was providing better remedies. It was, basically, a successful voyage, and hydrography benefited from the brilliant work of Henri Darondeau, the engineer-hydrographer on board.

Four months earlier, on 1st July 1837, the Héroine under Jean Baptiste Thomas Amédée Cécille (1) had sailed from Brest; it was a ship of 32 guns, and Cécille originally had instructions to protect French whalers in the South Atlantic Ocean. (2) These orders were subsequently altered, on account of the extension of French whaling activities, and the Héroine was required to sail to Capetown, and to make for Australia, zigzagging between the parallels frequented by the whaling ships, and to return home by way of Tahiti, 'to remind the Queen and the people of Tahiti that France is a great and powerful nation that watches throughout the world over the interests of her citizens.' (3)

Another place of interest to France was New Zealand, where seventeen different French ships called between January and December 1837. These included the Jean Bart, which was burned and its crew massacred in the Chatham Islands; Cécille was at the Bay of Islands preparing to sail to Tahiti when an American ship brought news of this disaster. With a French whaler, the Adèle, and the American ship, Cécille proceeded to the Chathams, but the suspicious natives soon took refuge in the bush; all that the French could do was to burn the village and to capture three Maoris. (4)

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(1) Another long-lived captain: born 1787, died 1873.
(2) Thus repeating a similar mission carried out by Cécille in 1835-6.
(3) Instructions dated Paris 18 June 1837.
(4) Journal du Havre, 27 March 1839.

One of these Maoris made a brief reappearance in later French history. He had been taken to France, taught to read and write, and converted to the Catholic religion, so that his services would be available as an interpreter and adviser 'in case we should have designs on that island [New Zealand]', but he died in 1842 after being brought back to New Zealand by a French ship. (1)

France's slight foothold in New Zealand was gradually being strengthened at the time of Cécille's visit, but the French government was too slow and too late. The British settlers and missionaries, under the unofficial protection of the administration of New South Wales, were preparing the ground for an annexation that had never really been in doubt. The French were at the most troublesome interlopers into what was now practically a domestic situation. (2) Cécille himself favoured the rapid taking over of the country by France, and probably played a considerable part in the promotion of the French colonisation scheme when he returned to France after a circumnavigation lasting two years. (3)

What exploration still remained to be done in the Pacific in the second quarter of the nineteenth century fell to Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville, whose austere figure dominates this period. He had already accompanied Duperry on the Coquille in 1822; when that ship returned to France in 1825 it was placed under his command, and renamed the Astrolabe at his request, so that the name of La Pérouse's ship should once more appear in the Pacific. (4)

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(1) Letter from Captain Lavaud to the Minister of the Navy, 15 March 1842.

(2) 'Captain Grandsaigne, of the whaler Ganges, complains greatly of the insults and vexations to which the French who put into port in New Zealand are exposed, and he asks himself to whom the island belongs where the British flag is raised everywhere ... some of colonists go so far as to set the natives against us by telling them that we come to avenge the death of the unfortunate Marion.' — Journal des Débats, 26 April, 1838.

(3) See T.L. Buick, The French at Akaroa, pp. 26-7. J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, p. 441n.

(4) Olive Wright, New Zealand 1826-27, p. 17.

The principal aim was geographical research, the verification of existing charts, including some of Cook's, and the discovery of any land still unknown. The last was the most difficult - d'Urville had to wait fourteen years to achieve it - but even the hydrographical research he had in mind, in the coral reefs of the Pacific, was not without danger.

'I had learned from painful experience,' he wrote, 'what an enormous difference there is between carrying out easy expeditions like those of the Uranie and the Coquille, across open seas without any detailed investigation, without a single hydrographical exploration, and on the other hand working all the time at a geographic survey of dangerous and often unknown shores, and struggling against hostile elements in an endeavour to fulfil one's instructions.' (1)

This is somewhat unfair to both Freycinet and Duperrey - especially to Freycinet - whose expeditions were thus pictured as simple sailing voyages; Dumont d'Urville seldom missed an opportunity of pointing out his own worth, but he certainly did earn the promotion to post captain which his work brought him. In a voyage lasting nearly three years he had crossed from the South Atlantic Ocean to Western Australia, followed the south coast from King George Sound to Port Jackson and sailed to New Zealand where, not without danger to himself, he had discovered French Pass between the south island and the off-shore island which now bears his name. (2) From New Zealand he took Kauri timber with which he erected a monument to La Pérouse at Vanikoro, (3) where he arrived soon after Peter Dillon. His travels then took him from the Fiji group, where he discovered, or rediscovered, the islands of Totoya and Matutu,(4) to New Caledonia, New Guinea, Amboyna and the

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(1) Ibid., p. 133.
(2) He also took a reasonable view of Maori-European clashes when he reprimanded some sailors who had wandered into some abandoned huts and removed various objects. 'One can scarcely doubt that most of the regrettable quarrels which have occurred between the savages and the Europeans owe their origin to causes of this kind.' - 'Ibid , p. 73.
(3) Ibid., p. 20.
(4) Sharp, The Discovery of the Pacific Islands, p. 216.

Celebes. (1)

Home in 1827, d'Urville took the deposed Charles X to exile in England in 1830. His interest in the sciences never left him, and he was still determined to lead another expedition into the Pacific. By 1836, his plans had sufficiently matured for him to put forward a proposal for an expedition through the Straits of Magellan, which the French had not visited since the days of Bougainville the elder; from there he proposed to go to the Solomons, where traces might still be found of the survivors from Vanikoro who had sailed in their makeshift boat; he would then circle around Australia to New Zealand and back to the Cape through the Dutch East Indies. It was Louis Philippe who suggested adding Antarctica - not because of the old tradition of the southern continent that had attracted the French in the past, but because it was the last frontier of the unknown. D'Urville accepted with alacrity (2) and, with the added advice of Louis de Freycinet, he left Toulon on 7 September 1837, sailing in the faithful Astrolabe to which the Zélée had been added as convoy.

From the Straits of Magellan he veered south to seek the ice barrier; it was sighted on 15 January 1838 and it soon blocked the way. The expedition discovered Joinville Island and Louis Philippe Land, bleak snow- and ice-bound isles of desolation, grimmer by far than Kerguelen's island. To the sailors at least it was no cause for regret that scurvy forced them to turn back towards Chile.

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(1) The inevitable Gallic mystery pursues even d'Urville, at any rate on his first voyage. There was one servant on board whom the New Zealanders suspected of being a woman in disguise, 'who, in spite of his protests, had some difficulty in escaping from the attentions of those who remained incredulous.' O. Wright, op. cit., p. 207.

(2) 'Je m'inclinai sans retour avec la pensée royale', Dumont d'Urville, Voyage au pôle sud et dans l'Océanie, Introduction, p. LXVIII.

They sailed from Valparaiso in May to the Marquesas, to Tahiti, and across to the Solomons, where no traces of any lost Frenchmen were found. By December 1839, having criss-crossed the Dutch East Indies from New Guinea to Singapore, d'Urville was anchored in Tasmania. The time had come for him to make his second attempt to reach the south; Wilkes and Ross were on their way, and France ought not to miss her chance of glory. Leaving the Zélée with the sick at Hobart, he sailed for the Antarctic; on January 21st, he discovered Adélie Land, so named after Louis Philippe's wife, this being also his own wife's name.

In February he was back in Hobart, preparing for the return to Toulon by New Zealand, the Loyalty group, New Guinea and through Torres Strait to Bourbon. (1)

It had been a hard voyage; d'Urville had lost thirty dead, and his own health was impaired, (2) but it was the most important expedition since the turn of the century. It produced a mass of general notes on Oceania, and d'Urville's own reports on the Solomons and the Loyalties were the most detailed and the most reliable that any explorer had yet brought back. It is sufficient tribute to say that the charts drawn by Vincendon-Dumoulin in the Antarctic, the Fiji and the Solomon groups were still in general use at the beginning of the twentieth century.

D'Urville closed the period of discoveries in which the personality of the leader was still the main force in an expedition; science and technical aids had not yet overshadowed Man himself - and it was fitting that d'Urville, with his encyclopaedic mind and his great energy, should bring the chapter to an end.

'His whole character, his qualities as a sailor, and as a leader, his taste for botany, recalled Baudin ... He brought to a successful

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(1) See J.P. Faivre, Expansion Française, pp. 418-22.
(2) He died in 1842, but in a railway accident.

end two great Pacific voyages, he raised the French flag over the Antarctic. Although he developed to a considerable degree the art of publicity and took care that no one should ever forget him, his successes, which he strongly magnified, are beyond question. A perfect example of the methodical and conscientious explorer who never concerned himself with any other vocation or any other ideal, he is without doubt the man who contributed the most to the final perfecting of the map of the Great Ocean.' (1)

After him came the political sailors - to fail in the attempt to colonise New Zealand, to succeed eventually in annexing Tahiti, New Caledonia, the Loyalties, the Marquesas, the Tuamotus. New sufferings, new deaths, new successes and failures were recorded by the French missionaries who shed their blood, cared for the lepers and proselytized in the numberless islands, and thus indirectly served the cause of France in the Pacific. The merchants came too, no longer adventurers in search of island Eldorados, nor even casual traders seeking sandalwood and copra, nor again unruly whalers and sealers, but men who settled in the islands to bring a new and often an unwelcome civilisation face to face with the ancient cultures. Then came the artists, the painters, the novelists, the tourists into a world of hotels, bungalows and airstrips - all that now remains of the enormous ill-named Pacific, into which dreams of a southern continent and the perpetuum mobile of national pride had driven the adventurers of a bygone age.

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(1) J.P. Faivre, op. cit., p. 243.

CONCLUSION

We find, in retrospect, that the French explorers can be classified into two distinct categories. The first we might be tempted to call 'the amateurs' - Bougainville, de Surville, Marion du Fresne, - linked, especially Bougainville, to the period of French trading voyages. Just as the traders formed a clear and distinct prelude to the main period of French exploration, so did these three lead up to the officially-sponsored voyages of Kerguelen, La Pérouse, d'Entrecasteaux and Baudin. Marion du Fresne's expedition typifies the transition between the first and the second group: a combination of an official expedition and of a voyage à l'aventure; Bouvet and Marchand are isolated episodes, both conceived by commercial organisations, but neither quite in the mainstream of their time.

The two groups illustrate the development of France's attitude towards the Pacific: Bougainville was allowed to go; La Pérouse was sent. Several factors were responsible for this change, and it would be an over-simplification to claim that it resulted from Bougainville's voyage. James Cook played an important part in awakening the interest of officials, in France and elsewhere; scientists became more curious as the limits of the unknown world shrank; political rivalry and long-term strategic considerations sharpened the contest between amateurs and professional geographers.

It was between 1768 and the end of the century that the French, who hitherto had been only academically interested in the Pacific, and held back by their ties with Spain, first began to advance a claim to be considered as a major Pacific power. If one year can be said to mark the transition, it is 1771, when Marion du Fresne and Kerguelen were preparing to sail. Both these expeditions were planned by those who were to lead them, but they set out under official sponsorship and were equipped from Government funds.

Yet what did France achieve in the Pacific? How much, indeed, was there to achieve?

Let us take, first of all geographical research. The French were just too late to be the first discoverers of Tahiti; they neglected the opportunities offered by New Zealand; they missed eastern Australia and New Caledonia. But they did solve the mystery of the Solomons, drive back the frontiers of the imaginary southern continent, and fill in many blanks in the central and western Pacific. Their achievement would be seen to better advantage, if everything they did were not dwarfed by the figure of James Cook. Had not England had the good fortune to find "l'incomparable Cook", "l'illustre Cook", France's role would have been far greater, for, in this as in most other matters in the eighteenth century, France and England were the two great protagonists.

But if we ignore Cook for a moment, we see that the French explorers were not negligible, that they can be favourably

compared with others who came before them, or who followed them. Their aims were not ignoble, and nearly all of them were men of great courage and ability. From Bougainville to Baudin, although they had their occasional lapses, they were able sailors: in most cases they were just and good towards their men, and they earned their loyalty and their admiration; for their time, they were unusually well-disposed towards the native races, and, without exception, their official instructions enjoined them to foster good relations. We find Bougainville enthusing over the Tahitians, de Surville ~~blindly trusting the Maoris~~ inviting the Solomon islander to his table, Marion blindly trusting the Maoris, who were to kill him, Kerguelen planning to befriend the non-existent inhabitants of Austral France, La Pérouse losing his illusions only when his friends had been massacred, d'Entrecasteaux and Baudin gaining the friendship of the backward Tasmanians whom others were to exterminate, Marchand greeting the Marquesans.

There were, among the French, some excellent hydrographers. Bougainville might have been more thorough, and Kerguelen's work less perfunctory, but the reports prepared by La Pérouse, d'Entrecasteaux and Baudin, and the charts drawn under their supervision, were of lasting value. The numerous French names that now appear on maps of the Pacific are sufficient tribute to their industry, and there are many others that have been superseded by some given by later explorers, or eliminated by a reversion to the native titles.

It was perhaps in scientific research that the French distinguished themselves: they brought back specimens of all kinds, discovered new plants and new animals, and took some of the earliest tentative steps towards the science of anthropology. They had here a great tradition behind them, the insatiable curiosity of the Age of Enlightenment, and the support of scientific societies in Paris and the provinces. From Buffon to Lacépède, there were few names in the natural sciences that were not linked in some way with the Pacific. And yet, because the ordinary man tends to reckon success in terms of conquest, the Pacific has received only slight attention from the French themselves. However considerable the impact of French voyages may have been on the popular mind, it did not - perhaps again because Cook's impact was immeasurably greater - have lasting effects. French imperialism was to centre itself on Africa, to conquer large tracts of that continent, and to foster a native

remains still largely unexplained. Tahiti, the Marquesas and a number of smaller islands were taken over with greater or lesser ease, until every atoll had been claimed by one or other of the great powers. Little could be done with most of the islands, for their resources were small. Tahiti retained its romantic reputation, but it is only recently that, with improved forms of travel, it has acquired value as a tourist centre.

There remained New Caledonia, France's largest possession in the Pacific and one with considerable mineral wealth. Yet, for nearly half a century, the name evoked in the mind of the average Frenchman little more than the picture of a convict settlement; it is an impression that dies hard and has only recently been erased. Thus, although the island lies in the same latitude as central Queensland, it still has only 25,000 inhabitants of European descent, part of whom are not of French extraction.

New Caledonia supplies the key to France's attitude towards the Pacific. A Frenchman's life still centres on France and on Paris; the French way of life, unlike the British one, is not easily exportable. In the eighteenth century, the French entered the Pacific in search of adventure and fame, of gold, of articles of trade, of natural history specimens. In the nineteenth century, they did not, even to the limited extent possible, enter it as colonisers. And the twentieth century, with its wars and depressions, has been too troubled for them to pay much attention

to their possessions there. Awareness of what some Frenchmen have done in earlier days may help them to play a greater role in the Pacific in the future, so that, when the time, perhaps still distant, comes for them to break the ties that link them to the islands, they may leave less evanescent memories of their true achievements.

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BN,NAF : Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; material classified under Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises.
ML : Mitchell Library, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.
SHM : Service Hydrographique de la Marine, Paris.
M/f : Microfilm.

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