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EXPLORATION AND ADVENTURE

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“They raised new stars on the silent sea that filled
their hearts with awe,
They came to many a strange countree and marvellous
sights they saw
The villagers gaped at the tales they told, and old eyes
glistened with pride—
When barbarous cities were paved with gold in the
days when the world was wide ”

HENRY LAWSON

FOREWORD

Born before the microphone and in his books Mr. Clifford Collinson, himself no mean traveller, has shown a freshness of outlook and a flair for vivid presentation that have made his name a household word with children. So popular are his Broadcast Talks to Schools that he has now been called to the microphone no fewer than eighty-three times. And the same humour and freshness are to be found in the present book, which has become a geography and history reader with all the attraction of, shall we say, the latest book on famous flyers.

The *Handbook of Suggestions* writes:

"To help children to realize the relative positions and sizes of the great land masses, and the shape and extent of the intervening oceans, a good plan is to let them follow on the globe the journeys of such pioneers as Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama, Magellan, Drake, and Franklin. From the difficulties and problems which confronted these early travellers the teacher can draw abundant material for instruction in a most interesting form. Various incidents in the story of exploration will call attention to the changing altitude of the noonday sun as the travellers proceeded northwards or southwards; others will bring home to the children how, in the early days of sailing-ships, journeys were dependent upon the direction and strength of the prevailing winds in different parts of the world; how mountains and deserts stopped progress across the land; how difficulties arose through floods or drought. In fact, if he chooses his stories well, the teacher can in a sense lead his children to rediscover the world for themselves, giving them at the same time a correct idea of the general distribution of land and water, mountain and plain, wind and calm, rain and drought, over the world's surface."

And again, on the subject of history, it is emphasized that children take the keenest interest in the lives of great men.

The object of this book is threefold. to provide some string reading, to let the children to whom it is given "rediscover" much of the world for themselves, to give very human studies of some great explorers, and at the same time to serve as an introduction to the history of exploration, giving an idea of the gradual growth of geographical knowledge. Thus, in particular, the voyages round the world and the description of South Polar exploration will give a "pungent sense of reality" to the textbook explanation that the seasons are the other way round in the Southern Hemisphere. Similarly, the child who has scaled the Andes with Pizarro, or explored the tip of South America with Magellan and Drake, or staggered alone, half naked, through the African jungle with Mungo Park, will not quickly forget these natural features and conditions. Each chapter has its map, but the use of the atlas is encouraged. In the hope also of increasing the value of the book's history teaching, a chronological table has been added, giving a bird's-eye view of the history of exploration.

The book deals with the exploration of the Americas, of the Antipodes, and of Africa, and with the two first voyages round the world. Moreover, it conveys an indication of the changing motives which at different times and under different social conditions caused men to set forth on journeys of exploration and adventure. The final section thus brings us to the scientific expeditions of more modern times, and in this Mr. Collinson deals with the Arctic and Antarctic regions. The unsurpassable epics of Nansen and Scott emphasize the fact that nowadays adventure is found not so much in the discovery of new lands, as in man's battle against Nature in the great struggle for accurate knowledge, and that this battle calls for every whit as much heroism as was shown by Cortes, when he boldly fired the ships behind his little army on the shores of Mexico.

The method of presentation is the well-tried one of choosing a few great figures and of describing their exploits in detail, but

Mr. Collinson has particularly endeavoured, by brief connecting summaries, to bring out both the essential importance of the explorers whom he has not discussed at length and the inter-connection of one journey with another. New are Mr. Collinson's flair for telling a good yarn and his choice of subjects. He has spread his net wide, and some lesser-known tales have thus emerged which are just as thrilling and, incidentally, probably more fascinating than the more familiar ones they displace. Why should not teachers have something new?

In conclusion, it may be said that Mr. Collinson has focussed his attention rather on the human side of the individual explorers than on their heroic aspect, though of this, by the very nature of things, there is a-plenty.

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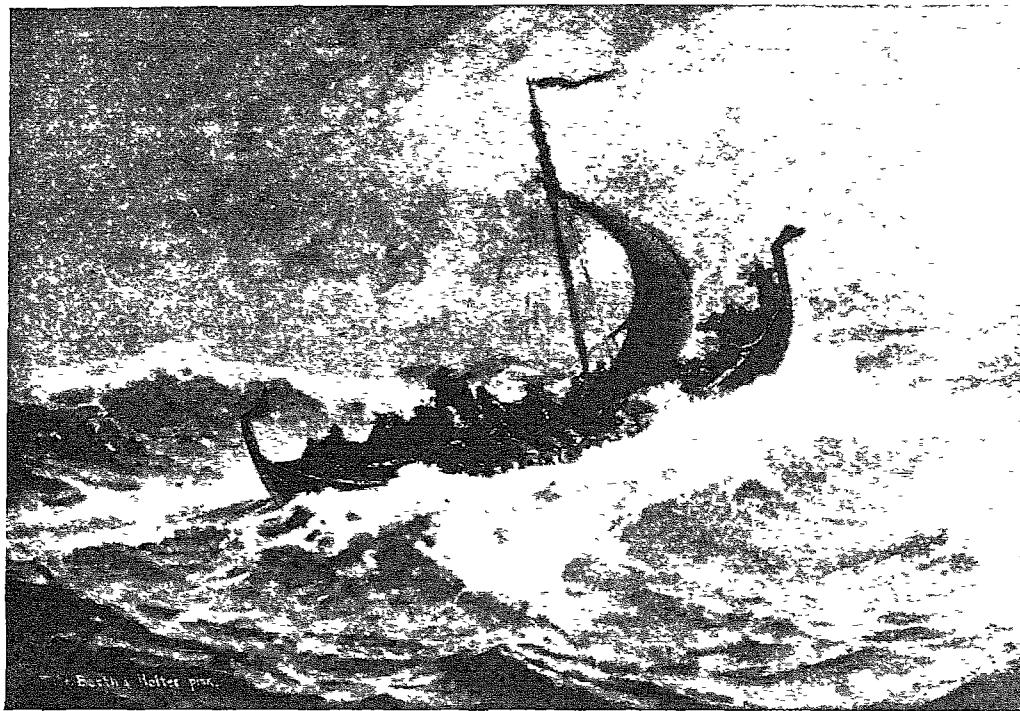
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LEIF ERICSON DISCOVERS AMERICA
An imaginative picture by W. Barth and Holter

EXPLORATION AND ADVENTURE

CHAPTER ONE

THE VIKINGS REACH AMERICA

NOWADAYS anyone can buy a world atlas for a shilling or so and, running through the pages, can see all the countries of the world laid out before him, with every detail clearly shown; the hair-line rivers, the carefully drawn lakes, the bays, the jutting capes, and the caterpillar mountain ranges. And, be it said, most of us take all these things very much for granted, seldom pausing to reflect that such detailed maps are possible only because men have toiled thousands of miles through steaming jungles and, greatly daring, have sailed forth beyond the sunrise into unknown seas whereon no vessel had ever sailed before.

For the early explorers had no land-map nor ocean-chart to guide them; the ever-receding horizon was their limit of knowledge, and beyond it—who knows? Perchance those strange and terrifying lands of which returned travellers told their tales; lands peopled by one-eyed men whose solitary eye glared unwinking from the centre of their foreheads; by fox-headed men; by men without heads at all, whose faces were set upon their chests, and by strange one-legged monstrosities whose feet were so enormous that when it rained or when the sun was too hot they just lay flat on their backs, hoisted the leg and, spreading their toes, sheltered beneath the vast canopy thus provided.

In these days we have ships like floating cities, whilst charts, lighthouses, wireless and elaborate navigating instruments have reduced the risks of ocean travel to almost nothing. Have you ever stood and looked up at a modern transatlantic liner as she lies motionless against the quay-side; at her towering steel sides, her massive superstructure, her great decks one above the other—an enormous and apparently immovable bulk weighing tens of thousands of tons? It is difficult to believe that even the mightiest billow could rock her. And yet, look at her now out in mid-Atlantic. From the spray-hidden horizon the great foam-crested rollers come shouldering in never-ending succession, their towering marbled flanks fretted and wrinkled by the screaming wind. Gone now is her stately calm; the mighty ocean tosses her about like a cork and she rears and rolls and plunges through the charging seas. Her streaming bows soar and swoop, the driving spray rattles like bird-shot on her canvas bridge-screens, and the pouring smoke is whipped backwards flat from the tops of her smoke-stacks. But through and beneath all the turmoil sounds the unhurried trampling of the great engines, whose shining pistons rise and fall steadily in lordly indifference to the tumult outside, whilst the hissing glass-green wake behind bears witness to her undeviating progress towards the sheltered waters of her port of destination.

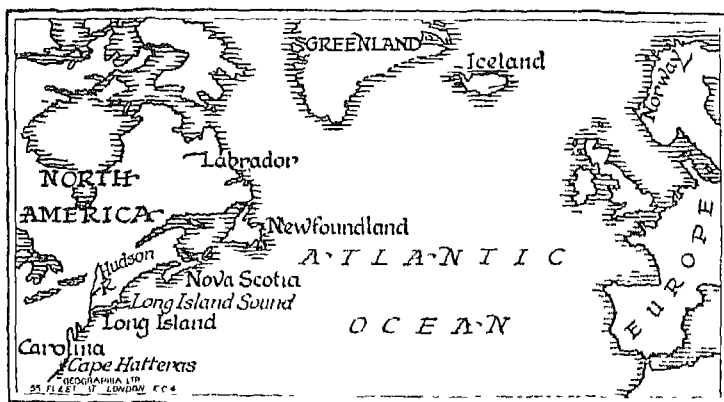
Yet even to-day, with these great liners running to and fro as punctually as railway trains across all the Seven Seas, many people look upon an ocean voyage as a hazardous undertaking. What then would they have thought of crossing the Atlantic in a little wooden sailing-ship, only sixty feet long and open to the sky,

like a rowing-boat, for practically the whole of its length? But that is what the Vikings of Norway did five hundred years before Christopher Columbus, the so-called discoverer of America, was born.

The Vikings, or "Creek-men," were fierce sea-rovers who lived in Scandinavia and as far back as the ninth century—eleven hundred years ago—these fair-haired giants, armed with battle-axe and sword and clad in shirts of mail and great horned helmets, used to harry the coasts of Britain; raiding, burning the hamlets and carrying away what plunder they could put their hands on. Terror seized our coastal villages when the watcher, straining his eyes across the cold and misty levels of the North Sea, espied the approach of the sinister black sails of the Viking ships; long rakish craft whose swannecked prows were topped with carved dragons' heads, and whose gunwales, almost awash, were lined with the round and painted shields of their fierce warrior-crews. These "Northmen," whose own barren homelands held limited resources and to whom the sea offered a highway to countries full of plunder and high adventure, stormed southwards as far as Bordeaux, and even into the Mediterranean itself, where they raided the African coast.

With these amazing exploits in mind, therefore, it is hardly surprising to find that their explorations extended westwards to America as well as southwards to Africa. And it is now a generally accepted historical fact that the Vikings not only discovered the American continent but landed on its shores and lived there for a considerable time nearly a thousand years ago—hundreds of years before the great Columbus crossed the Atlantic

and dropped anchor for the first time off the coast of the New World. But Columbus sailed out into the blue with definite purpose, and voyaged doggedly for five weeks across the vast ocean, while the Northmen moved westward by easy stages and made their final discovery of America by sheer chance. If you look at the map which accompanies this chapter you will see that, moving westward from Norway, the first land you



sight is Iceland; then comes Greenland, and beyond Greenland, at no very great distance, lies the continent of North America.

Iceland was discovered by the Northmen in the year 867, and became, as the years passed by, a kind of refuge for pirates and other lawless men, and a very wild crew they were. But wildest of all was a young carroty-haired Viking named Eric the Red, whose behaviour at last became so outrageous that even his harum-scarum friends objected to it and banished him for three years. So Eric sailed away towards the west in the year 982

and when he returned at the end of his three years, announced, as it were with a fine flourish of trumpets, that he had found a new land with rich meadows, fine woods and good fishing which he had named Greenland. So glowing was his description of it that a large party of men and women, with all their cattle and household goods, went back with him to this wonderful Greenland of his, and settled in a kind of colony at the south-western end

Amongst this party was a man named Herjulf and his wife, whose son, Bjarni, possessed a trading-ship of his own in which he made frequent long voyages. Bjarni happened to be away on a voyage at the time his mother and father decided to go to Greenland, and he was terribly upset when he got back to Norway and found that the house was shut up and that they had gone away. Bjarni appears to have been one of those bull-headed kind of people who simply have to keep on doing a certain thing just because they have always done it before. As far back as he could remember Bjarni had always spent the winter with his parents, so now it never occurred to him to do anything else than repeat it, although it meant his following them all the way to far-off Greenland. He had no idea where Greenland really was, beyond the fact that it lay somewhere towards the west, but he set forth in his little vessel across the wintry northern seas towards the setting sun. For three days he and his crew sailed west with a following breeze and then the wind, shifting round, blew them south far out of their course and a blinding fog came down, blotting out everything. Through this grey blanket of mist they drifted with furled sail "for many days," until one morning it cleared

and the great red sun loomed above them again. And there, ahead of them, was land!

Now Bjarni was really no true explorer; he had only one idea in his head, and that was to reach his father and mother in Greenland as quickly as he could. If this land ahead of them was not Greenland, then he was not interested in it. And it did not look at all like Greenland to him, did not tally with what he had heard about Greenland's rugged coastline. This land was low-lying and covered with trees. So Bjarni hoisted sail and scudded north, leaving it behind him. But two days later they sighted land again and this, too, was flat country covered with timber. By this time they were beginning to run short of water and of wood for their tiny cooking-fire, and the crew asked Bjarni if they might land and get some. But Bjarni was so anxious to get home to his mother and father that he said, "No! you must go without!"—and he sailed out to sea with a south-west wind behind him.

On the morning of the fourth day once more they sighted land, but this third land was different altogether from the low-lying coast-lines of the previous two. It was high and mountainous, with ice and snow upon it. The crew, now being very short indeed of both wood and water, once again asked their captain to anchor and let them go ashore, but Bjarni, mule-headed and obstinate as ever, said, "No! this land is good-for-nothing!"—and sailed onwards along its shores, discovering as he cleared the northern end of it that it was an island. Four days later Bjarni and his now almost mutinous crew reached a fourth land, which, from its appearance, he judged to be Greenland at last. And so

it was. They came to land under a rocky cape and found a boat drawn up on the beach, which, miraculously enough, turned out to be the boat of Bjarni's own father—so Bjarni spent Christmas with his parents after all.

Now we know that Bjarni was in a hurry to get back to his mother, but even so, one would have thought that, when spring-time came, he would have wanted to go back and have another look at this wonderful new country he had discovered. But no, Bjarni, as has been said, was not of the stuff of which true explorers are made. As a matter of fact, after this one adventure, he sold his ship, settled down on his father's new farm and never went to sea any more at all—which seems a strange and very disappointing thing to have to record about the European sea-captain who was the very first to sight the shores of America.

However, we happen to know that he did this very thing, because the Icelandic sagas say so in so many words. A saga, by the way, is an ancient Scandinavian tale or history told by word of mouth in the far-distant times when books and writings were practically unknown. Later, of course, when the art of writing things down was developed, these stories were inscribed on parchment, but in the days of Bjarni the Viking, professional story-tellers went from village to village and told their yarns around the fire of an evening. And in telling their tales, these wandering story-tellers had to stick pretty closely to actual facts because in many cases the heroes of their narratives, or their relatives, were in their audiences, and consequently any deviation from the truth was liable to correction, on the spot, by word of mouth—or by a large and heavy battle-axe. If only for

this reason, therefore, we are able to place considerable reliance on the literal truth of these sagas of Iceland and on their tale of how Bjarni discovered America by accident and then, ingloriously, abandoned the sea and settled down to breed cows on his father's farm.

But Leif, the son of the wild and lawless Eric the Red, was a different kind of man altogether, and when he heard of Bjarni's discovery he determined to follow it up without delay. He bought Bjarni's vessel and with a crew of thirty-five men set sail from Greenland towards the New World. And sure enough he reached it. And not only did he reach it but, being far more enterprising than the bull-headed Bjarni, he landed on various spots, and, finally, on an island which may have been what is now known as Long Island. He built huts from the ample supplies of local timber, and spent the whole winter there.

Now amongst the crew was an elderly German named Tyrker, and one day Tyrker disappeared. Leif was very upset about this because Tyrker was an old servant of the family. So Leif set out to look for him with a search-party, but they had not gone very far before they saw the old fellow coming towards them, singing at the top of his voice and capering about like a madman. It was some little time before Leif could get anything sensible out of Tyrker, who at first only gabbled to himself in German and pulled the most awful faces, but ultimately it turned out that he had come across some wild grapes, had crushed a few bunches, allowed the juice to settle and ferment, and had then proceeded to sample this very heady liquor, with the deplorable results already related. Perhaps because of this incident,

Leif named the country Wineland—Wineland the Good. When spring-time came, Leif loaded up with timber and with clusters of old Tyrker's famous grapes, and returned in safety to Greenland.

You will have noticed that so far none of the Norsemen had come across any of the inhabitants of this newly discovered continent, either friendly or otherwise, and it is only when we come to the next—the third—visit of the Vikings to America that at last we hear something of the North American Indian.

Leif, son of Eric the Red, had a younger brother named Thorvald, who was all impatience to go exploring to Wineland too as soon as Leif returned and told of his adventures. Leif helped his younger brother in every way he could; he advised him in the selection of his crew of thirty men, and even lent him his own ship to make the voyage in. In due course, therefore, Thorvald sailed away towards the setting sun and the little vessel reached Wineland safe and sound. He landed in a suitable spot, and spent not only the winter there, but the following summer and a second winter also. During the summer he and his men explored the coastline in the ship's pinnace, but found no trace of either man or beast, with the exception of a strange-looking wooden erection, which, judging from Thorvald's description of it, was probably a disused Indian wigwam.

It was only when they were actually on the way home to Greenland, after a stay of nearly two years, that they encountered Indians for the first time. One day as they voyaged north they came to a headland covered with trees where they landed, and Thorvald was so delighted with the general outlook that he exclaimed, "This is

a beautiful spot where I should like to make my home " ¹ It was a very ill-omened remark because, on their way back to the ship, they perceived on the sands "three lumps" where no lumps had been before. One of the Vikings ran forward and was astounded to find that they were canoes, lying bottom upwards. He called his mates, and they turned the canoes over and behold, crouched in hiding beneath each one were three dark-skinned savages—nine savages in all. Thorvald gives the name of *skraelings* to these first specimens of the North American Indian to be encountered by white Europeans.

The *skraelings* jumped to their feet and fled, but the Norsemen chased them, managed to catch eight of them and promptly slew them. The ninth Indian got away, but very soon afterwards returned with a whole fleet of canoes filled with shouting warriors who attacked the Viking ship with a hail of arrows. Thorvald and his men fixed their war-shields along the gunwales of the vessel to raise them and so provide more protection, and after a sharp fight the *skraelings* withdrew. But the harm was done. One of the arrows had pierced Thorvald's side and he lay wounded unto death. "Carry me to that headland," whispered the dying Norseman, "that headland which I thought the best place to dwell in; maybe it was the truth that came into my mouth that I should stay there a while. Bury me there with a cross at my head and my feet and call it Crossness hereafter for ever." And so the gallant young Thorvald died. His leaderless crew remained where they were for the winter, and when spring-time came they loaded up

¹ *The Norse Discoverers of America*, G. M. Gathorne-Hardy (et seq.).

with grapes and timber and sailed back to Greenland with the sad news.

According to the sagas, twenty years then elapsed during which no successful voyages to Wineland are recorded. But in or about the year 1020 we come to a very elaborate and important expedition, that of Thorfin Karlsefni, son of Thord Horsehead. Karlsefni did the thing in style, with two large ships, a quantity of cattle, and about one hundred and sixty men, many of whom took their wives with them. Leif's sister Freydis, a regular dragon of a woman, went along also, taking with her Thorvard, her husband, a poor hen-pecked kind of man whom Freydis had "married mainly for his money."

This mixed party sailed away west in their two ships and, reaching the American coast safely, ran south, with a fair wind behind them, a long way down the coast, probably almost as far as Cape Hatteras in North Carolina. On the way they passed some immensely long stretches of white sand, and Karlsefni christened them with the romantic and alluring name of Furdustrands—the Wonder Beaches. Altogether Karlsefni and his party stayed for three years, now in one place and now in another, and during that period encountered Indians on two occasions. The first meeting was quite a friendly one, the savages merely staring at the new-comers for some time—and then paddling away. But the second encounter, although everything was friendly enough at first, ended in a tremendous battle—all because a bull thought fit to bellow.

It happened like this. One fine morning a large fleet

of canoes appeared, so many that, as the saga says, "the sea was black with them," and scores of *skraelings* landed on the beach, bringing with them piles of grey skins and furs. Karslefní thereupon traded with them, exchanging pieces of bright red cloth for the furs, and all was going merrily when suddenly one of Karlsefní's bulls emerged from a nearby wood and, after one look at the savages, let out a tremendous bellow. The *skraelings*, who had never seen—or heard—a bull before, were absolutely terrified and scuttled like rabbits down to the water's edge, tumbled into their canoes and fled. They must have taken the bull's bellow as a personal affront, for soon afterwards they returned in great force, waving their war-clubs and yelling at the top of their voices. A fierce battle thereupon ensued, which would probably have ended in the defeat and slaughter of the Vikings had not Freydis, daughter of Eric the Red, snatched up a dead Norseman's sword, and laid about her to such good purpose that the *skraelings* scattered before her in terror, and finally withdrew altogether.

After this experience Karlsefní decided to pack up and return north, and he arrived back safely in Greenland with all his party. And so ended Thorfin Karlsefní's famous voyage to Wineland and the Wonder Beaches, during which he and more than a hundred companions spent just over three years somewhere on the eastern coastline of the North American continent.

So far as the records show, there is only one more visit to Wineland to record, that of the iron-jawed Freydis, daughter of Eric the Red and sister of Leif Ericson. A terrible woman, as you will see. She decided

to make a second trip, and went into partnership with two Vikings who had only just arrived in Greenland from Norway and so presumably were not aware of her true character. The arrangement was that Freydis and her hen-pecked husband should go in her ship and the two brothers in theirs, each taking thirty fighting men and several women, and that the profits of the trip, if any, should be equally divided between them. But just before they started Freydis smuggled five extra men aboard her ship, which upset the two brothers for a start and opened their eyes to her treacherous ways.

They set forth however and, reaching the American coast, settled in for the winter. But owing to the rascality of Freydis, friction arose between the two parties almost at once. Freydis manœuvred the best camping-ground for herself, giving the brothers a swampy place near a lake, and was in all things so grasping and so dishonest that finally all communication ceased between the two camps.

Then, one morning early, the unspeakable Freydis slipped out of bed and stalked through the dewy grass to the camp of the two brothers. Putting her head inside the brothers' house she softly called the name of one of them, who climbed out of bed and joined her outside.

"What do you want?" he said.

"Oh, I just want to know if you will sell me your ship," she replied.

"I will agree to that if it will please you," said the unsuspecting man, who, in spite of all the dirty tricks that Freydis had played upon him and his brother, only wanted peace and quietness.

Thereupon Freydis left him and returned to her own

camp, whilst the poor man, scratching his head and marvelling at the unaccountable ways of women, went back to bed to finish his interrupted sleep. But Freydis climbed back into her own bed and promptly planted her wet and ice-cold feet in the middle of her husband's back, who of course woke up with a jump.

"What's to do?" he said.

"I have been to the two brothers," hissed Freydis, savagely, "to bid for their ship; but they took it so ill that they beat me and grossly maltreated me, and you, you miserable worm, lie here and do nothing about it. Up now—up and avenge me!"

And she nagged and stormed at the poor man so outrageously that at last, being unable to bear it any longer, he arose and, taking with him a party of armed men, marched over, with Freydis, to the brothers' camp, "went in to them as they slept, took them and bound them and brought each man out as he was bound." And Freydis, who was waiting at the door, had each man killed as he was brought out, the two brothers and every one of their men.

Remained now only the women of the camp—five poor terrified females—and not even the acid tongue of the dreadful Freydis could drive any man to do them harm. So at last she herself, eyeing the cowering women murderously, slowly hissed the words,

"Hand me an axe!"

. . . and then, weapon in hand, she advanced and deliberately slew the five women one after the other. Next day she seized the ship belonging to the two murdered men and, having loaded it up with all the good things she could collect, sailed back to Greenland,

where, sad to relate, in spite of the fearful crime she had committed, her brother was too soft-hearted to punish her as she deserved.

So we come to an end of the accounts which have been handed down to us, in sagas, of the discovery of America by the Norsemen in and around the year 1000. No permanent colony was established by them on its shores, nor, as was the case later with Columbus, was there any great king to back them, nor powerful Empire to follow up their discoveries. Their great adventure had no far-reaching results and was soon forgotten by the few people who knew about it, save as a tale that is told.

CHAPTER TWO

MARCO POLO AND COLUMBUS

RELIGIOUS ardour, the lust for gold, the urge for power, the need to open up new avenues of trade, and, more recently, the desire to extend purely scientific knowledge; each and all of these motives, since the beginning of time, have led men to adventure forth beyond the horizon into unexplored lands and across unknown seas. And it is rather curious to reflect that the two discoveries of America, first by the Vikings and later by Columbus, were neither of them directly due to any of these things, but, instead, to pure accident. For Bjarni the Viking, it will be remembered, was looking for his mother when he found North America, whilst Columbus, five hundred years later, set out to find China and stumbled across Central America instead.

In the olden days it was easier to explore by land than by sea. Perhaps the hardships were no less, but the mental strain was not so great. For whereas the land-traveller could usually see each step before him and live on the produce of the country through which he was passing, the old navigators sailed on and on over vast and lonely seas with ever-dwindling stores of food and water, not knowing when land would appear, or indeed whether any land at all existed beyond that apparently limitless waste of waters. In that respect, at all events, the land explorers had the better of it, and consequently we find that in the beginning more new lands were discovered by walking to them than by

sailing. For instance, it was by land exploration and not by sea that China first became known to the peoples who inhabited the shores of the Mediterranean;



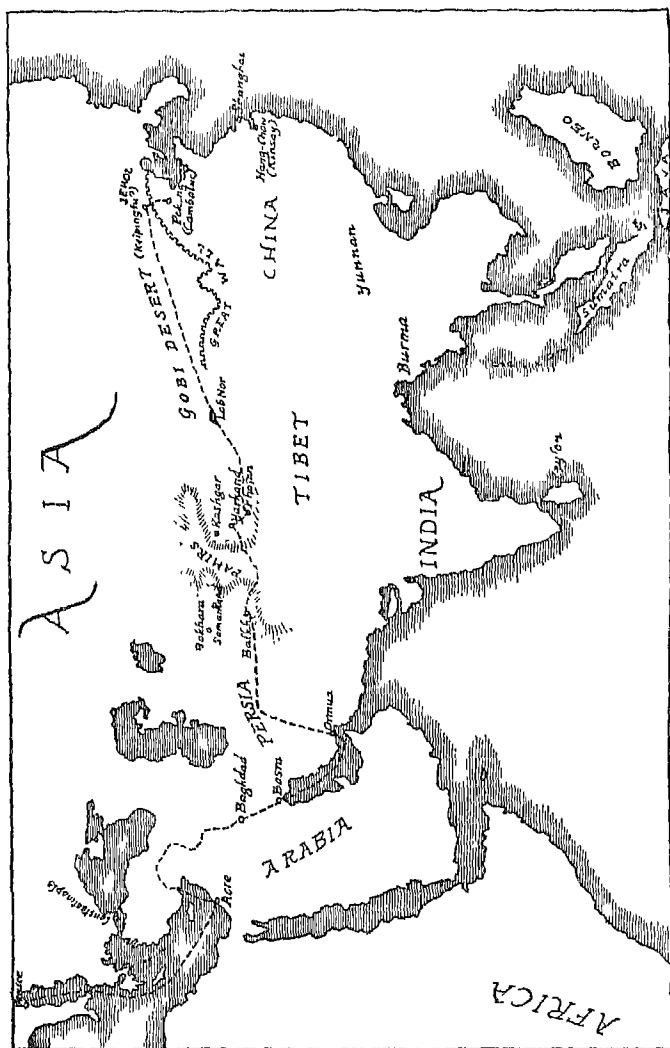
MARCO POLO

An imaginary portrait of Marco Polo in old age, by Titian

peoples who were already highly civilized, and who were pushing out in all directions on trading ventures.

It was purely a trading venture that led two men

from Venice, named Niccolo and Matteo Polo, to make their way in 1255 through unknown Persia and Afghanistan to the Court of the Great Khan, Emperor of China, at Peking. Sixteen years later they repeated the journey, this time taking with them Niccolo's son, a boy of fifteen, whose name was Marco. Looking back at it now, that journey seems almost incredible, for they passed through utterly wild and unknown regions which have only been penetrated again, with great difficulty, by Europeans, within the last hundred years. Voyaging by sea from Venice to Acre on the coast of Palestine, they travelled through Armenia and, skirting the western highlands of Persia, passed through Baghdad to Basra and thence, by sea, to Ormuz at the foot of the Persian Gulf. Here it was their intention to take ship for the East, but the vessel that was offered them looked so unseaworthy and smelt so abominably that they changed their minds about that. Instead they turned inland and northwards and made their way, riding and on foot, right across Persia and over the mountains to Balkh, in Afghanistan. Continuing eastwards they crossed the great highlands of the Pamirs—known as "The Roof of the World"—and, descending by way of Kashgar and Yarkhand to Khotan, found themselves at a place named Lob or Lop Nor, and face to face with the great Gobi Desert. Here they were told that out in the sandy wastes of the vast desert travellers were often lured away from their companions by strange and mysterious spirit-voices, and were thus brought to their deaths, so the three travellers tied bells round their horses' necks, lest, when travelling at night, they should be separated from each other,



THE JOURNEY OF THE POLOS

For thirty days the two elder men and young Marco journeyed across the Great Desert, until at last they were met by messengers of the Great Khan, who had heard of their approach. Thereafter they were "excellently honoured and provided with everything," and in due course came to Keipinghi, the Summer Retreat of Khublai Khan, the Emperor of China. The Great Khan seems to have taken an immediate fancy to young Marco, who, with his clear-cut features and flashing eyes, was now a handsome stripling of twenty-one. Besides being good-looking, the lad was extremely intelligent, and showed himself keen to learn everything he could. So much so that before very long he "knew four languages and their alphabets, and also their manner of writing"—which was no mean achievement, considering the complexity of Chinese characters. Moreover, he was prudent and discreet, and he conducted himself "so well and besecmingly" that the Great Khan decided to send him as his special envoy on a mission to the province of Yunnan, close to Burmah—a place so far away that it took him six months to get there.

As we have said, Marco was a very bright lad, and he noticed that when other envoys returned from similar missions, the Emperor always asked them to tell him what they had seen and heard upon the way. And if, as frequently happened, they could tell him no news at all, he was wont to storm at them royally. So Marco, on his journey to and from Yunnan, kept his eyes wide open and made careful notes in a diary of all he observed, with the result that when he arrived back and told his story, the "Lord of the World" was so delighted with him that he made Marco his Chief Ambassador,

and sent him on many more official missions during the years that followed. In this way, therefore, Marco managed to travel over a great part of Asia, and even visited places as far away as Tibet.

For seventeen long years Marco himself, as well as his father and uncle, remained in the service of the Great Khan, and then, to the Emperor's great sorrow, they returned, this time by sea, to their home in Venice. Here, with the help of the diaries that had already been so useful to him, Marco set down in book form an account of all his adventures—a book which even to-day is probably the most fascinating work of travel ever written.

In this book he tells of many strange things: of great hunting parties that set forth with five thousand mastiff dogs to round up and kill boars, wild cattle, stags and hares; of the marvellous "postal" system with which, by means of relay runners, messages could be conveyed swiftly from one end of the empire to the other, and of asbestos from which the Chinese made table-napkins. He also speaks of coal, calling it a "kind of black stone which they dig out and burn like firewood"; of alligators, which he describes as "great four-legged serpents, of such immeasurable size as to strike you dumb"; of animals which were obviously rhinoceroses, but which, because of the great horn sticking up out of their snouts, he calls "unicorns"; and of a "gryphon bird," "so large and strong that it can take up an elephant in its talons, and carry him high into the air and drop him so that he is smashed to pieces, and having so killed him, the bird gryphon swoops down on him, and eats him at leisure."

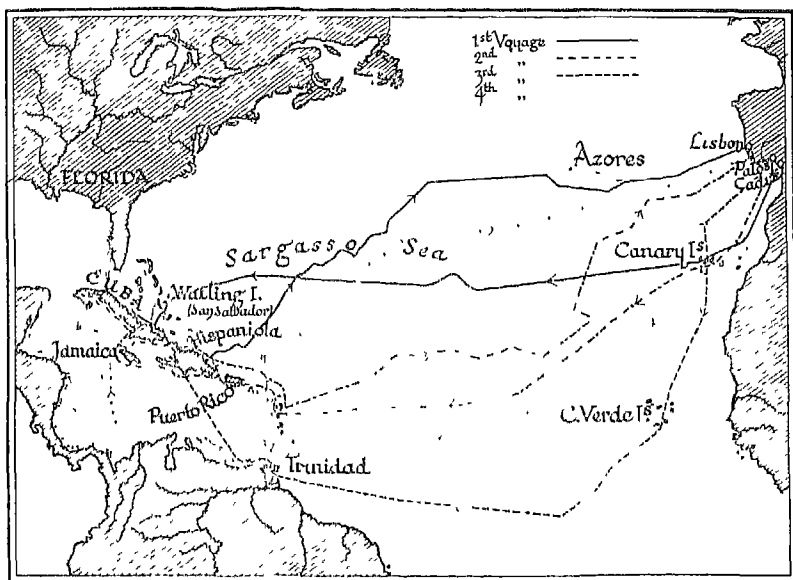
What is more important, however, for our present purpose, is the fact that Marco dwelled a great deal in

his book on the almost incredible riches and luxury of the great Emperor's Court, telling of his jewels, of his gorgeous raiment, and of how the monarch drank his wine from goblets of solid gold. He had a great deal to say, too, about the magnificence of the great cities and the wealth of the Chinese merchant-princes. In consequence, when these amazing facts became known to the Western world, imaginations were fired, and there were many who longed to reach China in order to enrich themselves by means of trade. And, of course, a great many managed to do so, making the long journey eastwards and back again by land. But travelling in those days was both difficult and dangerous; the roads were very bad, and the caravans often met with robbers and wild beasts. Even so, these merchant-adventurers managed to bring back with them much gold, many rich fabrics, pearls and precious stones, and also valuable spices which they were able to sell at a great profit to rich men who were fond of good food, and who were delighted to have something which gave a new and delicious flavour to the dishes served up at their banquets.

Now, as the years passed by, this trade with the Far East in luxuries and spices became so important that here and there men began to wonder whether it were not possible to discover a new way of getting there; a safer way than the long land-route eastwards. And it was in his attempt to find this alternative route to China, by going *west* instead of east, that Christopher Columbus discovered America—by accident.

Christopher Columbus was born in Genoa, and he went to sea when he was fourteen years old—a blue-eyed

lad with hair as red as a carrot—and during the next twenty years of his life he sailed to many countries, including England, and even, so men say, as far as Iceland in the wintry northern seas. However that may be, he became a very fine seaman, and knew more than most of the sailors of his time about navigation and the



THE FOUR VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS

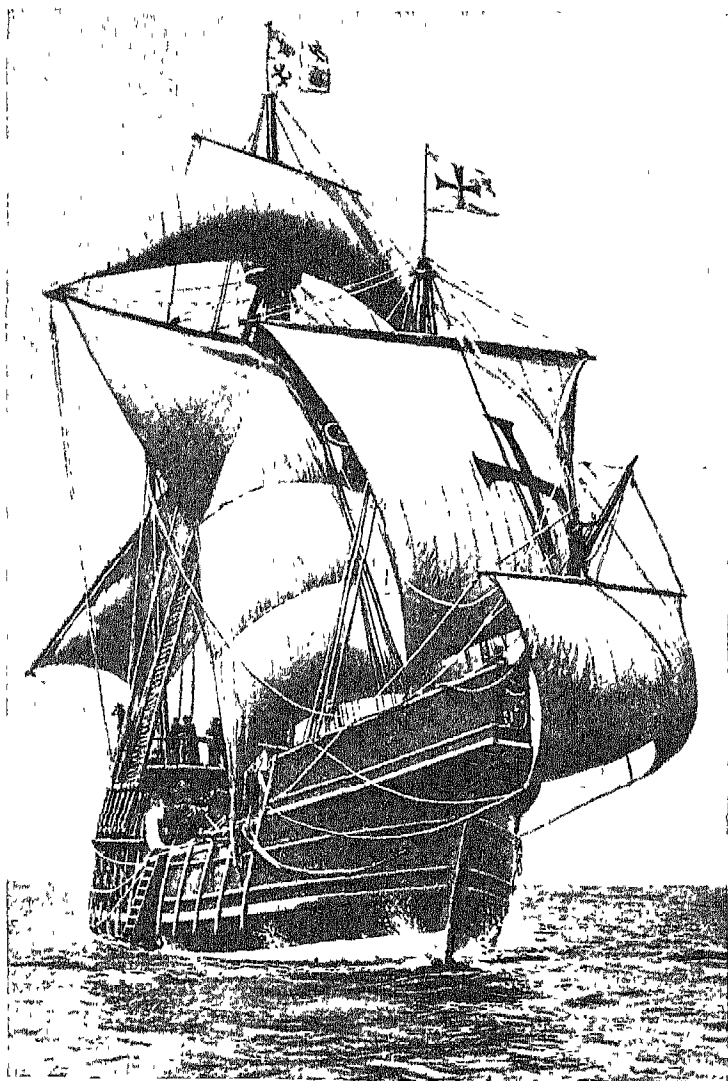
use of charts. Columbus was one of those who for many years had been giving a great deal of thought to the possibility of reaching the Far East by sailing *westwards*, across the vast unknown waters of the Atlantic Ocean. His belief that land lay somewhere beyond its farthest horizon was strengthened by the fact that, from time to time, not only pieces of strangely carved wood, blown

by the wind, had come drifting across the Atlantic to the shores of Europe, but also tropical plants, and on one occasion the bodies of two men with dark skins and queer broad faces.

So at last Columbus went to the King of Portugal—for the Portuguese at that time were very enterprising mariners—and suggested that the King should provide him with ships and men to make an attempt to cross the Atlantic, in order to extend his kingdom beyond the seas. The King listened to all he had to say, and managed to persuade the gallant seaman to leave with him all his valuable charts and sailing plans, whilst he thought the matter over. Then secretly, and with a route mapped out from the plans of Columbus, the King sent out an expedition of his own, and if the weather had been good it is quite possible that these ships might have reached America whilst Columbus was still kicking his heels awaiting the King's decision. But a great storm arose and drove them back.

When Columbus heard of this dastardly trick he was furious, and, shaking the dust of Portugal from his feet, he went to Spain and laid his proposals before the Spanish King and Queen. They, however, were busy with other things, and at first would not listen, but at last Queen Isabella became interested and finally so enthusiastic that she declared she would sell all her jewels to provide the necessary funds if they could not be raised in any other way.

{On August 3, 1492—almost exactly two hundred years to the day since Marco Polo had bidden farewell to the Emperor of China—Christopher Columbus set forth from the port of Palos, in Spain, in his attempt to



A MODERN RECONSTRUCTION OF COLUMBUS' FLAGSHIP,
THE SANTA MARIA

reach the land of the Great Khan by sailing westwards across the unknown waters of the Atlantic ocean. To-day we should consider his three little vessels little better than Thames barges, in size if not in appearance, for his own flagship, the *Santa Maria*, was but 100 tons burden, whilst the *Pinta* and the *Nina* were only half as big, and carried a mere eighteen men apiece. But, nothing daunted, these three little sailing-boats set forth on a quest more perilous than any yet recorded, for now there could be no hugging of the coastline, with sheltered harbours close at hand when the tempests blew. Day after day and night after night they must sail upon an unknown sea in search of an unknown land—a land which, for all they knew, might not even be there at all. Worse still, possibly they might even come to the very edge of the world and drop off into space, because, although Columbus *believed* the world to be round, neither he nor anyone else knew for certain.

Is it to be wondered at, then, that when the jagged peaks of the Canary Islands had disappeared below the eastern horizon, and the three little boats were tossing like corks on the vast immensity of the Atlantic, the sailors began to panic badly and to demand that their leader should turn back home? But the gallant Admiral argued successfully with them and fortunately, soon afterwards, the ships came within the influence of the “trade” winds. These winds blow steadily from the north-east, and they filled the sails and drove the ships merrily forward for many days over the leaping blue seas. But by and by the wind dropped and great patches of seaweed still further hindered their progress, so that once more the men grumbled bitterly and their temper

became exceedingly ugly. Nor were matters improved by the hopes raised from time to time that they were at last approaching land: hopes that were always proved false; for once they were misled by the sight of two pelicans to believe that land was near, and on several occasions a low-lying mass on the horizon, which looked like land, turned out to be no more than a bank of clouds.

On the night of October 9th, however, when they had been more than nine weeks at sea, hope revived strongly, for although it was too dark to see them, they heard the cries of many birds passing overhead and guessed the birds were making for land not far away. When morning came, a sharp-eyed sailor spotted a small branch, with unwithered leaves and berries upon it, bobbing about in the sea alongside. Two nights later, on the memorable October 11, 1492, Columbus, sitting in his cabin in the high stern of the *Santa Maria*, looked up from his charts and papers, and gazed out thoughtfully over the sea which for so long had shown him nothing but empty horizons. And then, suddenly, his eyes narrowed to pin-points. Grasping the edges of the little table he rose with a cry upon his lips, for far away across the moonlit waters *there twinkled a light*—a faint gleam, now clear and now obscured, but undoubtedly a light—a torch borne by some native through a grove of palm-trees!

Land—ho!

At dawn the rising sun revealed low shores not far off, and, with the *Pinta* leading, the three gallant little vessels approached the land, whilst the crews sang the *Te Deum*, and many of these rough men brushed away tears of emotion from their eyes. Columbus, with his

two captains, was rowed to the beach in the cutter and sprang ashore, fully armed beneath his scarlet cloak. A moment later, to the astonishment of the naked natives who huddled in a terrified crowd at a safe distance, the royal standard of Spain was unfurled to the breeze, and at the foot of a large cross, which was hastily erected, the great navigator fell on his knees and gave thanks to God for this triumphant ending to his perilous voyage.

He named the island San Salvador—the island of the Holy Saviour. It is situated in the Bahama group, and to-day it is known as Watling Island—an island that belongs to Great Britain. San Salvador being an island lying far to the eastward of the mainland, Columbus had thus not yet even reached America, much less China, the land of the Great Khan, which was his real objective. We know that he was mistaken, but he at first firmly believed he *had* reached China. The fact that many of the natives wore rings of gold in their noses tended to strengthen this belief, and he began to look round for the whereabouts of the Great Khan, because he was anxious to deliver into his hands the letter of royal greeting from the King and Queen of Spain, which he carried with him. But as he made his way from island to island in the group he realized that this could not possibly be the land Marco Polo had described, and he came to the conclusion therefore that it must be a group of islands lying just to the westward of China in the Indian Sea; for which reason he named it the West Indies, which is the name it bears to the present day.

Three months later, accompanied by the *Pinta*, Columbus set out to sail home in the tiny 40-ton *Nina*, for on Christmas Day his flagship the *Santa Maria* had

been lost on the treacherous reefs of Hayti. But terrible storms arose; the waves became enormous and broke right over the little homeward-bound ships until, during one dreadful night of turmoil, the *Pinta* foundered and sank. When the grey morning broke, only the *Nina* was to be seen staggering along under bare poles through the mountainous seas. But still the gallant little vessel, buffeted and battered though she was, managed to struggle along. Although provisions were nearly exhausted and the sailors many times gave up hope, she sailed on until, at last, coated white from truck to keelson with sea-salt, she came reeling into the Azores on February 18, 1493.

A few days for rest and refreshment, and then on she sailed again, Columbus being feverishly anxious to reach Spain and proclaim his great news. But stormy weather still dogged him, and it was not until March 15th that the little *Nina* arrived safely home. On Palm Sunday Christopher Columbus passed through the streets of Seville. The roads were lined with wildly excited people; the air was rent with shouts of joy. Six "Indians" brought home by Columbus preceded him, and parrots and other birds with brilliant plumage were borne before the great explorer, who himself rode on horseback through the cheering crowds. A triumphant homecoming indeed.

It was a very different homecoming from that which awaited him eleven years later, when, friendless, penniless, and sick unto death he was carried ashore in a litter from his fourth and final voyage, to die soon afterwards in obscurity. For Columbus, although a brilliant navigator, was no statesman. Mutiny in the colonies he

founded in the West Indies, together with treachery amongst the lay courtiers who surrounded the King of Spain, brought about his downfall, as it has brought disaster to many others of his kind. For it so often happens that the pioneers who go forth and create new sources of wealth for their countrymen are betrayed and destroyed by those who stay safely at home and use lying words as their weapons of conquest.

During those eleven years, however, that intervened between the triumph of Columbus and his downfall, he made three more voyages across the Atlantic to the West Indies, and even passed beyond them to the vast coastline of South and Central America, seeking ever for the golden treasures of Marco Polo's land of the Great Khan. On one occasion he reached the shores of Honduras, and here he searched for the passage through the continent which he felt sure existed, and which Magellan was to find much further south eighteen years later. Had he sailed west from here he might have discovered Mexico with all its incredible store of wealth which Cortes, the Spanish soldier, was able to seize when he stormed the Golden City in the Hills, some twenty years later.

For during the years that followed, the West Indies, and particularly Cuba, the largest of the islands, became the regular starting-place for all the expeditions organized by the gold-hungry Spaniards to explore the New World, lying just to the westward of them. It was from here that Balboa set sail in 1513 to the Isthmus of Panama, and, "standing upon a peak in Darien," was the first European to gaze down upon the glittering expanse of the Pacific Ocean on the other side—a discovery

only a little less important than the finding of America itself.

Fired by tales of the almost untold wealth of these new lands, more and more Spaniards and Portuguese now came pouring across the ocean, so that not only in Central America but all up and down the Atlantic seaboard of Southern America colonies of these people established themselves, and the vast extent of the new continent gradually became known. Even its northern regions were explored, for John Cabot the Englishman, sailing from Bristol, reached Newfoundland in the far north only five years after Columbus dropped his anchor off Watling Island. But the knowledge of the New World thus rapidly being extended was for a long time confined almost entirely to its *eastern* seaboard. Its western shores—the golden beaches that fronted on the Pacific Ocean—were still unknown. And it was a man named Pizarro who was the first European to explore those western shores of South America.

CHAPTER THREE

PIZARRO IN SOUTH AMERICA

FROM time to time rumours had reached the Spaniards established in Central America on the Isthmus of Panama of a country to the south, where—so the local Indians said—the people ate and drank from golden vessels, and gold was as cheap as old iron; the Empire, in fact, of the legendary Inca, or Emperor, of Peru. One or two Spaniards had actually fitted out small expeditions and tried to reach this wonderful golden country, but owing to storms at sea and impassable forests on land they had had to give up and turn back.

Then arose a man named Pizarro—Francisco Pizarro. Now, Pizarro was no child. He had travelled around for years in the West Indies and in Central America, but somehow he had been unlucky. That is to say, he had served with all kinds of expeditions and had been in quite a lot of battles, but when it had come to sharing out the plunder, Pizarro had somehow missed his share every time. The result was that at the age of fifty all he had to his credit was a good deal of empty glory, a head of grey hair, and a plot of rather unhealthy land in the neighbourhood of Panama, the new Spanish seat of Government.

Then the news filtered through of how Cortes, in the north, with a mere handful of men, had conquered the Aztecs in Mexico and managed to capture, literally, millions of pounds' worth of golden treasure. And when Pizarro came to hear of this he fairly danced with

exasperation and impatience, because, from what he had picked up in talking to the Indians, he knew that



PIZZARRO

From an early engraving

the country of Peru to the south was just as rich a prize as Mexico.

Now, he himself hardly had two pennies to rub

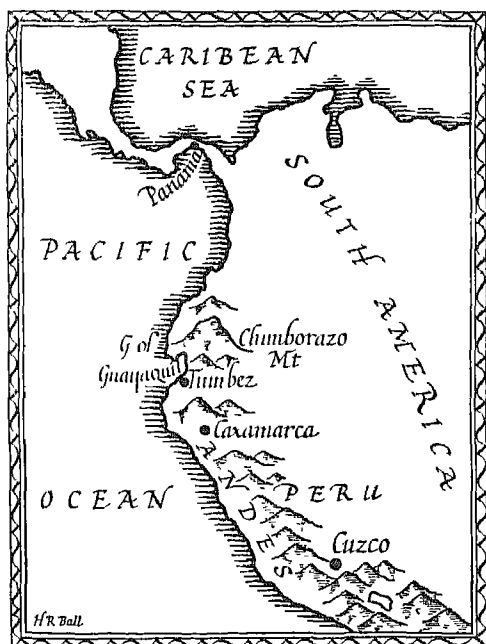
together, and certainly not enough money to fit out even the smallest kind of expedition, but, casting around, he managed to persuade another man to put up the money, and at last, in the year 1524, he was able to set out with a couple of ships and about a hundred men, sailing towards the south. However, what with bad weather and one thing and another, his first attempt was a failure and he had to return to Panama. Nothing daunted, he set forth again, but was unable to do very much better even this time, although he managed to get as far south as the coast of Peru. But one thing he certainly did find out. On going ashore at a place named Tumbez, he found that the walls of the local temples were covered with massive plates of pure gold. Unfortunately he had only one small ship and a handful of men, and therefore could not undertake anything adventurous; he just had to lick his lips hungrily and leave the gold where it was—for the time being.

However, he had something definite to work on now, so he returned to Panama and tried to get the Governor to fit him out with a really first-class expedition. But either the Governor thought he was a liar, or had no money to spare—whatever the reason, he refused to listen.

This was a bad set-back, of course, but Pizarro was not going to be beaten. He scratched up enough money for the fare, went right back to Spain and, after many delays, managed to persuade the King himself to back him, so that, when at last he did set sail from Panama on his third expedition, he found himself at the head of a little army of 180 men-at-arms, with a small squadron of cavalry.

He sailed this time, without mishap, straight to Tumbez,

and there he landed. Now, the western side of South America is rather extraordinary. A tremendous chain of lofty mountains, called the Andes—some of them 25,000 feet high and covered with snow—runs in what is practically an unbroken line the whole way from north to south, and only a strip of level coastal plain separates



these mountains from the Pacific Ocean. There were many small towns and villages on this coastal plain, and Pizarro managed to collect quite a lot of gold from their temples and public buildings. Also, which was lucky, the district round about Tumbes happened to be the place whence came the famous emeralds of Peru, and Pizarro succeeded in securing one for himself as large as a pigeon's egg. The soldiers would have got plenty of

emeralds too, if one of the army priests had not deceived them badly. He told them that true emeralds were unbreakable, and suggested they should test these by pounding them violently with hammers. Now, emeralds are not hard like diamonds, and of course they broke under this drastic treatment. The soldiers, in disgust therefore, threw them away. The old priest then quietly went around, picking up the pieces, and it is said that he landed back in Panama, later on, with quite a large quantity.

However, whilst the pieces of gold and the emeralds of the coastal plains were all very well in their small way, Pizarro was after much bigger game. He very soon found out that the capital of the country and all the really big cities lay away over on the far side of the range of snowclad mountains that towered up in front of him like a tremendous wall, and that the Inca of Peru—the Emperor himself—was encamped up there with an army of something like fifty thousand men at a place called Caxamarca. There was nothing for it, then, but to climb over the Andes, and Pizarro, although he was now sixty-one years of age, set about it. His total force now numbered 177, all told, of whom sixty-seven were mounted, and only three were armed with guns.

Six days marching across the flat plains brought them to the base of the mountain rampart, on the far side of which lay the ancient town of Caxamarca, and the Inca of Peru. In front of them rose those stupendous peaks, rock piled on rock, with their summits of glittering snow soaring high into the heavens. Just before they started to climb a messenger arrived from the Inca bearing greetings and a friendly invitation to visit him. The

messenger also brought, as gifts, a couple of very heavy and elaborately carved stone fountains, which, although possibly quite valuable, strike one as being the very silliest sort of thing to give to the leader of an army on the point of marching up the almost vertical side of the South American Andes! In spite of the friendly messages and gifts, however, Pizarro took no chances, and, dividing his forces, led the way up the mountains himself with a small scouting party, on the look-out for an ambush. But they met with no resistance at all. There was a definite track, but it was so narrow and steep that the cavalry had to climb all the way on foot, leading their terrified horses by the bridle. The path was more like a goat-track than anything, and it twisted and turned round the faces of sheer precipices. It was all right perhaps for a half-naked Indian, but a very different matter for these soldiers in their steel armour.

However, they kept on climbing upwards, and the higher they got the colder it became, till both men and horses were half frozen by the icy winds that came whistling down from the snow-capped summits. But at last they reached the crest of the range, where it spreads out into a bare expanse covered with dry yellow grass. It took them two days to cross this bleak plateau, and then came the descent of the eastern side of the Andes, which was a task almost as difficult and dangerous as that of the upward march.

At last, one afternoon, the valley of Caxamarca, green as an emerald, unrolled itself before them, with the dazzling white walls of the city shining in the sun. At the far end of the valley were some natural hot-springs—they are still there to this day—and it was round about

these that the Inca lay encamped, with the tents and pavilions of his army covering the hillsides like snow-flakes. One of Pizarro's captains kept a diary, and this is what he says about it. "The sight filled us all with amazement. So many tents, so well appointed. The spectacle caused something like confusion and even fear in the stoutest bosom. But it was too late to turn back, or to betray the least sign of weakness. So, with as bold a countenance as we could, we prepared for our entrance into Caxamarca."

Before emerging from the shelter of the foot-hills Pizarro formed his little army into three divisions, and then, advancing in order of battle and with banners streaming and the armour of his men glittering bravely in the rays of the sinking sun, they marched forward down the slope that led to the city. Not a soul came to meet them, and when they entered the walls not a living thing was to be seen, nor any sound heard except the clashing echoes of their own footsteps. The Inca's messenger had certainly told Pizarro that the city would probably be evacuated in order to provide accommodation for him and his men, but even so the place seemed so very empty and his reception so chilling that the Spanish leader decided to send one of his captains and a troop of horse at once as a kind of embassy to the Inca at the other end of the valley.

Now between the city and the Inca's encampment there was a long causeway built across the water-meadows, and over this the little party galloped with their armour rattling and trumpets blaring, whilst the Peruvian army stood at their tent-doors and watched them. Reaching the imperial pavilion they found the

Emperor, seated cross-legged on a golden stool in the middle of his court, and, after a short parley, the great Lord of Peru informed them that he and his chief men would come to visit Pizarro in state next day.

So far the Inca seemed friendly enough, but, situated as they were in the heart of a strange country and surrounded by thousands of potentially hostile warriors, Pizarro was badly worried. Then he remembered what Cortes had done in Mexico in almost exactly similar circumstances, and, after thinking it over, he decided to do the same—namely, to capture the monarch when he came to visit him next day, and to use him as a pawn in whatever happened afterwards. So at daybreak next morning he called his captains together and told them of his plan. There was a great square in the middle of the city, and he told them to hide their men in the surrounding buildings. Then, when he gave the signal, they were to rush forth, cut down any opposition and capture the Inca, unhurt.

So they hid themselves and waited—waited hour after hour, for it was not until the late afternoon that the Emperor, seated on a golden throne carried shoulder-high upon a litter, and accompanied by nearly six thousand of his people, all unarmed, entered the city. As the leading files of the procession emerged upon the great square, they opened right and left to allow the royal retinue to pass, and the Inca was borne to the centre of the open space. Then Pizarro gave the fatal signal, and the Spaniards, yelling their battle-cries, rushed out and fell on the defenceless Indians, butchering them where they stood. Many fled—in their agony some of them actually tore down the walls of the square and poured

through the gaps—but the nobles rallied round their Emperor and fought with their bare hands to protect him. They grappled hold of the horses' legs and tried to throw them—they did all that mortal man could do—but one after another they were cut down, till at last the royal litter tilted sideways and the Inca, falling to the ground, was captured. The whole affair lasted no more than half an hour, but during those thirty minutes of twilight more than five thousand helpless Indians were massacred in cold blood. It was a wicked business.

The Inca's army, left without leaders, scattered and fled, and the Emperor himself was held captive in the city. It did not take him long to find out that what Pizarro was really after was booty, especially gold, and so one morning he told Pizarro that to buy his freedom he would completely cover the floor of the room in which they were standing with pieces of solid gold. Now this room was 17 feet wide and 22 feet long, and you can compare this in your mind with the size of the largest room in your own house. Pizarro, as most men would have done, looked round the floor-space and shook his head, unbelievably. But this only put the Inca on his mettle and, drawing himself up proudly, he said he would not only cover the floor, but would fill the room with gold as high as he could reach—and standing on tiptoe he stretched his hand as high as he could up the wall.

Pizarro was still more amazed, but, taking the Emperor at his word, he drew a red chalk-line along the plaster at the height indicated, which was at a distance of 9 feet from the floor, and told him to start. Thereupon the Inca—who was being treated with great respect

by the Spaniards and was allowed a certain amount of liberty—sent messengers all over the country to collect gold from the royal palaces and from the temples and public buildings. Soon it began to pour in—massive plates of gold from the temple sanctuaries, some of them weighing up to 75 lbs.; vases, goblets, drinking vessels and ornaments of all kinds. On a good day twenty to thirty thousand pounds' worth of gold would come in and be added to the growing heap in the ransom-room. In those days gold and also silver were so common in Peru that in the temples even the water-pipes and cisterns were made of it, and in the gardens of the royal palaces there were long vistas laid out with all kinds of glittering flowers and fruit-trees made out of nothing but gold and silver, fashioned with infinite skill and minute perfection.

Pizarro, who was in a hurry, sent out some of his own men as well to collect the treasure, and two Spanish soldiers who went south to Cuzco, the capital, came back with two hundred palanquins piled high with gold. Slowly the pile grew higher and higher, and at last, when it had reached nearly as high as the red chalk-line, Pizarro, who was in a fever of impatience to move south, told the Emperor that no more need be paid. He then set goldsmiths to work to melt down this enormous pile of gold into ingots, so that it could be handled the more easily, and when this work was finished—and it took a month to do it—they weighed it. It may sound incredible, but the value of that treasure, in modern money, amounted to four million pounds sterling—not counting a great pile of silver and a heap of almost priceless emeralds.

A fifth of the whole lot was put aside for King Charles of Spain, who had financed the expedition, and the remainder was divided out amongst them. Pizarro's own share worked out at £150,000 plus the Inca's throne, which was worth another £65,000. It was made of gold so pure that it was soft; it could be moved about, like putty, with the fingers. The captains and officers received gold to the value of fifty to sixty thousand pounds each, whilst the ordinary soldiers, the rank and file, were handed amounts which averaged about £15,000 for each man. In all history, no such a mass of booty—negotiable booty—has ever fallen to so small a band of military adventurers as to Pizarro and his merry men. Indeed, they came to look on gold so cheaply that a common soldier would think nothing of paying £157 10s. for a bottle of wine, £100 for a pair of shoes, and anything up to £6,500 for a good horse!

Now, although Pizarro had told the Inca that he need pay no more ransom, when it came to the point he refused to let him go as he had promised. He was afraid that if he did, the Emperor would gather an army and wipe him out. As a matter of fact, Pizarro simply did not know what to do with him: he dared not let him go; he could not leave him behind, and it would have been very awkward to take him along as he marched south. Then came news that the local Indians were massing and threatening to attack, and someone started the whisper that the Emperor himself was at the bottom of it and playing the traitor. This was absolutely untrue, but Pizarro, to his eternal shame, took advantage of it to accuse the Inca of high treason and to bring him to trial. The whole thing was a trumped-up affair and a

mockery of justice. But the Inca was sentenced to death—to death by burning at the stake, that very same night.

Two hours after sunset, in the light of flickering torches, the Spaniards assembled in the great square of Caxamarca to witness the last dreadful scene. It was the evening of August 29, 1533—almost exactly four hundred years ago. The Inca was led forth, chained hand and foot, and was bound to the stake. The priest—the same one who had swindled the soldiers out of their emeralds—begged and implored the Emperor to become a Christian, promising if he did that he should be allowed to die quickly by being strangled instead of burned. With his eye on the lighted torches, the Inca weakened and allowed himself to be baptized, whereupon the faggots were removed and the noose passed about his neck. At the last moment he turned to Pizarro, "What have I done," he cried, "that I should meet with such a fate? And from your hands, too," he added, looking the shamefaced Pizarro full in the eye, "you who have met with friendship and kindness from my people, with whom I have shared my treasures, who have received nothing but benefits from my hands?"

Pizarro turned his head away, and seeing this, the Emperor, drawing himself up proudly, confronted his fate with the courage of an Indian warrior. The stick that twisted the rope was turned, the noose tightened, and with a last frightful grimace he died. So perished Atahualpa, the last of the Incas of Peru.

By this time the news of Pizarro's success had reached Panama, and many more Spaniards had arrived. It was

therefore with an army of something like five hundred trained soldiers that he marched south to the siege and conquest of Cuzco, the Peruvian capital

For many years thereafter the Spaniards ruled the country as conquerors, and although they quarrelled and fought bitterly amongst themselves, the work of exploring South America went on. One expedition penetrated as far south as Chile, but many of the soldiers and their horses were frozen to death. Another went east to find a land where cinnamon trees, providing a spice highly prized by the Spaniards, were said to grow in large numbers. Part of this expedition, under the leadership of a man named Orellana, encountered and embarked upon the mighty River Amazon, and, after incredible hardships during a voyage of some two thousand miles, at last reached the Atlantic Ocean at the river mouth, having thus travelled right across South America.

So, little by little, the Spaniards opened up and explored the interior of this vast mass of land which they still believed to extend from the north to the south pole without a break save for the one narrow, twisting channel, leading through into the Pacific Ocean, which the great navigator, Magellan, had recently discovered far to the south. But the story of that wonderful voyage must make the subject of a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAGELLAN FINDS A WAY

AT the latter end of the fifteenth century Europe was dependent on the Far East for most of its luxuries: jewels and calico from India, drugs from Arabia, artists' colours from Cambodia, silks from China, and, more important perhaps than any of these, all the spices—nutmegs, mace, pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cloves and so on—from the Spice Islands, Java and the Moluccas. And the greater part of all these things were brought to the European market by slow and laborious overland routes. Five years after Columbus reached America Vasco de Gama, the Portuguese Admiral, managed to sail round the Cape of Good Hope and to find a way eastwards, *by sea*, to India—to be followed in 1512 by one of his countrymen who, sailing far beyond India to Java, came to island after island "rich in cloves and nutmegs," the long-sought Spice Islands. This was a fine piece of work, of course, but all the same, it left the problem of the *western* route to Asia still unsolved. For, as the exploration of America proceeded, it became increasingly clear that this great new continent, stretching interminably from north to south, far from being China, as at first thought, was in fact a barrier, apparently solid and impregnable, preventing access to the long-sought Asia beyond. That a great ocean existed on the far side of it was already known, because Balboa, the Spaniard, had seen it from the top of a mountain on the narrow isthmus of Panama. Obviously, therefore, the next step

was to try to find a sea-passage either through America or round the north or the south of it, so that ships could sail into this great new ocean and, voyaging onwards, find what they sought.



MAGELLAN

From an early engraving.

It was a man named Magellan—Ferdinand Magellan—who did it. He was really a native of Portugal, but he quarrelled with the King of his own country and went

to offer his services to the King of Spain. As a matter of fact, there was tremendous rivalry at that time between Spain and Portugal; the ships of both nations were sailing all the seas in a perfect fever of discovery. And there was so much argument between the two countries as to the ownership of the various new places their sailors kept discovering, that the Pope of Rome, to settle it, gave one-half of the world to Spain and the other half to Portugal. But even so, when the Portuguese discovered Java and the Spice Islands at the other side of the earth, the fat was in the fire, because no one knew for certain whose section they were in. The King of Portugal said his people found them first, and that anyhow they were well inside his half; but King Charles of Spain said it did not matter who had found them because, obviously, they lay on his side of the dividing-line.

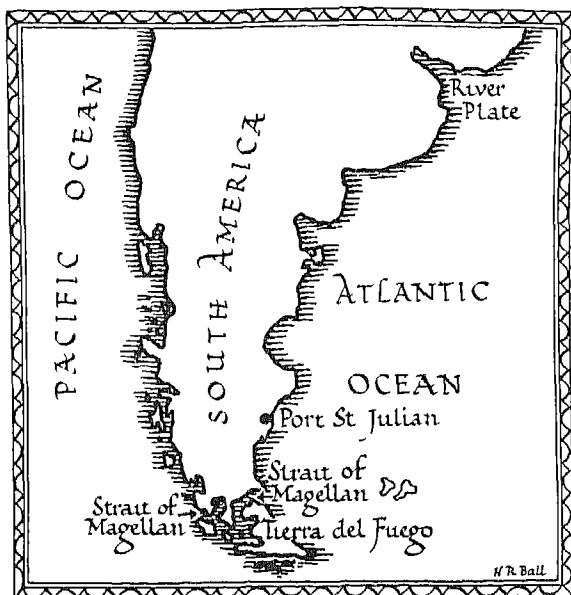
The Spaniards were exceedingly keen to get a footing in the Far East, and when Magellan came to young Charles, the King of Spain, and said he believed that he could find a way of getting to these Spice Islands *through America*, the King—he was only eighteen years old—took him at his word and fitted him out with a little fleet. He did the thing well too: the expedition consisted of five ships and 237 men and cost him £5,032 6s. 3d., which, in modern money, means about £25,000. The crew were a very mixed lot, Spaniards, Portuguese, Greeks, Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Negroes—all kinds, with a solitary Englishman, Master Andrew of Bristol, who must have felt rather dubious when he surveyed this human Noah's Ark.

However, they set sail from Seville on a September morning in the year 1520. Aboard Magellan's flagship

was a stout little Italian named Antonio Pigafetta, who had persuaded Magellan to take him along because, as he said, "he was desirous of seeing the wonderful things of the ocean." Well, he saw them all right, because in mid-ocean the fleet ran into a furious storm. The tiny ships, of which the largest was only about as big as a Thames barge, rolled their yard-arms under, and at last had to strike sail and scud along under bare poles before the screaming wind. When the storm ended they met with flat calms, but in December they reached the coast of Brazil and anchored safely in the harbour of what is now the great city of Rio de Janeiro. The natives on shore were quite friendly, and were only too pleased to exchange fowls and fresh fruit for the trade goods Magellan had brought with him—knives and fishhooks and cheap mirrors, and a lot of little brass bells. Antonio Pigafetta kept a day-to-day diary of the whole voyage, and he says that in exchange for a mirror the Indians gave them enough fish to feed ten men. But he himself brought off the best bargain of all, when he managed to secure six fat hens in exchange for the King of Clubs out of an old pack of playing-cards.

On the day after Christmas they put to sea again and, sailing southwards, reached the fifty-mile-wide mouth of the River Plate. It looked so wide and seemed to stretch so far inland that Magellan at first thought it might lead right through America into the Pacific, but the farther in they went the fresher the water got, proving that it was the mouth of a great river and nothing more. So southwards they crept once more, nosing into every likely looking estuary, but finding only bays and rivers, as before. By this time they were

well to the south of the Equator, and the farther they went, the colder it became. The seasons were reversed, of course, and the month of March, instead of being spring-time, meant the onset of winter—which rather bewildered them. Also the weather became steadily worse, heavy storms and seas, and at last, seeing a sheltered harbour, Magellan decided to lie up there for the



winter months. This harbour, which he named Port St. Julian—and it is still called that—lies only about two hundred miles north of the southernmost tip of South America, but, of course, Magellan did not even know there was a tip, and, quite wisely, put his company on half-rations until he could find out what he could count on in the way of local supplies.

For a long time past his captains and their men had

been grumbling and clamouring to go home, and this life on half-rations was the last straw. They mutinied. The detailed story of how Magellan dealt with them is a fascinating one, but a very brief summary must suffice here. He stabbed one of his Spanish captains through the throat and seized his ship before the crew knew what had happened; trapped the remaining ships in a little bay and stormed them in the darkness. Within twenty-four hours the mutiny was all over. Then he chopped off the heads of two of his captains and hung their bodies on a gallows which he erected on the beach. Fifty-eight years later, as you shall hear, Francis Drake put into the same harbour and found the skeletons still hanging.

Magellan and his men stayed at Port St. Julian for more than six months, and whilst they were there they made friends with the local natives. Our friend Pigafetta has a lot to say about these natives because they were exceedingly tall—giants in fact. They wore skin clothing and their huge feet were also wrapped in shaggy skin—for which reason Magellan promptly christened the country Patagonia, which means "The Land of Big Feet." It is a well-known fact that the Patagonians are one of the tallest races of men in the world, and it is not very difficult to imagine how our stout little Pigafetta fussed round the knees of these huge fellows and fairly squeaked with excitement. He gave one of them a mirror, and the giant, when he looked into it, was so astonished at the sight of his face, that he fell backwards and knocked four sailors overboard. Antonio says in his diary that the Patagonians were very fond of rats, too, and used to hunt them all over the ship. When they caught them,

they just popped them into their mouths and swallowed them whole—skin, tail and all.

When spring-time came, in the middle of October, Magellan weighed anchor and set sail again towards the south, and four days later sighted a great opening in the land. It looked so promising that he headed his ships due west and sailed right inside the entrance. Although he did not know it at the time, he had at long last found his famous Strait—the sea-passage that leads from the Atlantic into that other vast ocean first sighted by Balboa, seven years before, in Panama. It took them nearly six weeks to thread their way through all the devious channels, and during that time one of Magellan's ships deserted. It slipped back in the darkness and scuttled home to Spain. Perhaps this is hardly to be wondered at, because the conditions really were awful: constant gales and slashing rains, snow-covered peaks and desolate islands, a shortage of food, and to the south of them a great mass of land with the smoke of many fires blowing in the wind—fires lighted by hostile natives. Magellan named it *Tierra del Fuego*—The Land of Bonfires. Of course he had no idea that it was just an island off the very end of South America. The maps of those days show the Strait simply as a narrow, twisting channel dividing lands which stretch away endlessly to the south as well as the north. But Magellan and his three ships pushed on through the maze of islands, and you can get some idea of their experiences from the names given to various features: Crooked Reach, Snow Sound, Famine Point, Useless Bay, Long Reach, and, as they neared the exit, Point Mercy, Longed-for Cape—and Cape Victory.

In the late afternoon of November 28th, more than a year after they had sailed from Seville, the look-out on the leading ship heard the roaring of breakers and suddenly, as they rounded a big rock, they saw before them the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, with the setting sun, like a ball of fire, just touching the rim of the far horizon. Pigafetta says in his diary: "And when the Captain Magellan was past the Strait, and saw the way open to the other main sea, he was so glad thereof that for very joy the tears fell from his eyes."

Putting out to sea until he had cleared the land, Magellan sailed north for nearly three weeks to get into warmer latitudes and then, bearing west, he headed in the direction of the Spice Islands. Of course he had no conception of the enormous extent of the Pacific, and every day that dawned he expected to reach the Indies. But day followed day and week followed week, and still the sea showed nothing but an ever-receding horizon. Nearly two months went by before they sighted land—which turned out to be a tiny island with nothing and nobody on it. Eleven days later they raised another island, which was also barren of food and water. This was a terrible disappointment, because by this time things were absolutely desperate with them. What little water they had left stank so abominably that they had to hold their noses when they drank it, and so far as food was concerned they were actually reduced to eating the leather gaskets off the main yards. They soaked the leather in the sea for about a week, to soften it, and then fried it, and tried to swallow it. Most of the crew went down with scurvy and many of them died—Master Andrew of Bristol, the lone Englishman,

unfortunately being one of them. But our indestructible friend, Antonio Pigafetta, never had a day's illness and kept on writing all the time. And so the dreadful weeks passed by, but at last, on March 6th, after a voyage lasting three and a half months, they sighted a group of inhabited islands, where they anchored and managed to get plenty of fruit and fresh vegetables. But the natives were such a bunch of thieves that Magellan christened the group the Ladrone Islands—Robber Islands—and they are known by that name to this very day. You can see it on any map. These natives stole everything that was not nailed down, and things became so bad that at the end of the third day Magellan cleared the whole lot of them off his decks, pulled up his anchors—probably they would have stolen those too if they had not been chained to the ship—and then he sailed on towards the west, arriving a week later at an island lying somewhere about the middle of the Philippine group.

Here the voyagers fell on their feet, because the Filipino natives were very friendly and supplied them with any amount of fish and poultry and fruit, and with what friend Pigafetta calls "figs a foot long," by which he means bananas. It was on leaving here that the excellent Antonio met with a mishap that very nearly brought both him and his diary to an abrupt finish. In the bustle of departure he slipped on a wet plank, and, falling overboard, was nearly drowned. But some sailors heard him yelling and managed to pull him out just in the nick of time. He has a lot to say about it in his diary. However, they *did* get him out safely, and the ships sailed on to another island in the same group,

where lived the Rajah of the district, who invited Magellan to go ashore. Magellan was afraid there might be a trick in it somewhere, and declined to go, but some of the officers and our gimlet-eyed friend, Pigafetta, decided to risk it, and were entertained to a right-royal banquet at which, according to his account, everybody but himself had too much to drink, so that they had to stay on shore for the night.

Magellan became very friendly with this Rajah and, in the name of the King of Spain, proclaimed him king over every one of the surrounding islands. But one of the local chiefs objected very strongly to this and was so rude about it that Magellan, very foolishly, decided to teach him a sharp lesson. So he prepared a kind of punitive expedition: sixty Spanish soldiers, wearing helmets and breastplates, in three boats. About a thousand islanders went along in canoes too, Magellan rather vaingloriously inviting them to come and watch "how Spaniards could fight." Friend Pigafetta, who could not bear to be left out of anything, exchanged the pen for the sword and also joined the expedition.

The Spaniards rowed over to the island of the rebel chief during the night, and landed at sunrise. But the enemy was ready for them, and from the very first it was obvious that Magellan had "bitten off more than he could chew." The native warriors hid in the bush where the Spaniards could not even see them and directed a perfect hail of arrows and spears at the unprotected legs of the soldiers, who began to drop on every side. A poisoned arrow hit Magellan in the leg, and realizing how hopeless were the odds he ordered his men to fall back to the boats. But the natives followed them down the beach, and Magellan, fighting desperately

to the last, was surrounded and finally stabbed to death. So died the great navigator—his life simply thrown away in a miserable and totally unnecessary skirmish with a tribe of naked savages.

Pigafetta, heartbroken and badly wounded in the face, managed to survive, and he tells how, when the fight was over, they tried to recover Magellan's body, but without success, and then how the three ships sailed away south to the Spice Islands. There were too few men now to sail all three ships, so they scuttled the smallest of them and carried on with the two that were left. But just as they were getting ready to leave the Spice Islands on their way home, one of the two remaining vessels sprung a bad leak and had to be left behind, so that, out of the gallant fleet of five ships that had set forth from Seville, only a solitary one was left to struggle across the Indian Ocean and limp round the Cape of Good Hope. On the way a storm carried away one of the masts, and starvation and scurvy ravaged the crew, but our remarkably healthy Italian friend, Antonio Pigafetta, came smiling through it all, and was standing on the poop waving his hat when the gallant little vessel crept alongside the quay in Seville harbour on the morning of September 8, 1522—three years all but twelve days from the day of her departure.

The western route to the Far East and the first circumnavigation of the globe—two of the most outstanding geographical achievements of all time—were thus successively accomplished, and a voyage brought to a conclusion which was, and is still, almost without parallel in its tale of determination and suffering, disaster and success.

CHAPTER FIVE

DRAKE'S FAMOUS VOYAGE

It will have been noticed that so far, in the story of the discovery and exploitation of the New World, the Spaniards and the Portuguese have had it all their own way. Save for the brief visit of John Cabot and his son Sebastian to Newfoundland, England was hardly in the picture. The French as well, in the person of Jacques Cartier, had staked their claim in North America before the mariners of England began to play a hand in the game.

The sixteenth century has been well named the Age of Discovery. But it was also most certainly the Age of Buccaneers. Cortes conquered Mexico and plundered nearly two million pounds' worth of gold for Spain. Pizarro vanquished the Inca of Peru and took more than twice that amount—also for Spain. And all this golden treasure had somehow to be transported across the Atlantic in order to be stored away safely in the coffers of the Spanish King. It was no longer possible for the Spaniards to conceal the fact that every westerly wind that blew was bringing a steady procession of treasure-ships across the ocean, laden deep with the jewels and the golden booty of their conquests in the New World.

Then Old England began to wake up. If the Spaniards could pillage the Mexicans and the Peruvians, why could not we plunder the Spaniards? Why not, indeed? By all means let the Spaniards collect the gold—for

us! The scheme was so delightfully simple that, fifty years after Columbus first sighted the West Indies, our little ships had crossed the Atlantic too and were harrying the great Spanish galleons on the very doorstep of their treasure-house—in the Caribbean Sea itself. Those were the roystering and colourful days of the Spanish Main, famed in story and song.

By and by, however, the Spaniards became wary and sent powerfully armed convoys with their treasure-ships, so that they were no longer the easy prey they had been. And it was just about then that our Francis Drake—Frankie Drake of the golden beard and laughing eyes—bethought him of a new plan. In order to understand this you must realize that, whilst the treasure from Mexico was brought down by land, without much difficulty, to the Spanish ships lying waiting for it on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of Panama, it was a very different matter as regards Pizarro's gold from Peru. For, since Peru was situated on the Pacific Ocean side of South America, all the treasure had first to be transported by sea up to Panama before it could be carried by mule-train across the narrow Isthmus and then shipped to Spain. Ships—both Spanish and English—swarmed in the Caribbean Sea, but, on the other side of America, the Spanish had the Pacific Ocean all to themselves and their treasure-ships running between Peru and Panama just cruised along in complete security and confidence.

Francis Drake's simple but effective plan was to take a little fleet across the Atlantic, slip into the Pacific through the Straits which Magellan had discovered some fifty years before, and then proceed to play havoc

with the Peruvian treasure-ships in this ocean which, until then, had been the private and exclusive property of the King of Spain. So he went to see Queen Elizabeth about it. Now, to be perfectly frank, what Drake proposed was just plain piracy, but the dividends were likely to be so handsome that he very shrewdly suspected



Elizabeth would be willing to finance it—on the quiet. And indeed, when he had explained the plan, Good Queen Bess not only approved of it, but gave him a thousand crowns, and told him that whilst she had no idea what he was up to, he had better start doing it at once.

So he did. He got a fleet together and sailed from his beloved Plymouth in December of the year 1577, his

company consisting of five ships and 164 lads of Devon. Now, in command of one of the ships was a gentleman named Captain Thomas Doughty, who was apparently the kind of man to whom intrigue was as the very breath of life. He simply could not run straight, and from the very first he caused trouble. Drake reproved and reprimanded him, but it was of no avail whatever. Doughty continued to make trouble, so that by the time the fleet reached the coast of Brazil, Drake had had to clap him into irons.

On their way south down the eastern coast of South America they met with storms and bad weather, and the ships lost sight of each other so frequently that Drake had to spend precious weeks hunting for the stragglers. He finally came to the conclusion that there were too many ships, so he burnt one and broke up another, which left him with three. But the weather continued so stormy that when he reached Port St. Julian he decided to winter there, just as Magellan had done fifty-eight years previously. And when the crews went ashore, almost the first thing they saw was the gibbet on which Magellan had executed his two traitorous Spanish captains. In fact, their skeletons were still hanging, and Thomas Moon, the somewhat gruc-somely minded carpenter of Drake's flagship, promptly set to work to make several souvenir tankards out of the wooden uprights of the gallows-tree. History has a habit of repeating itself, and it did so at Port St. Julian, because it was here that the trouble between Drake and Doughty came to its climax. Doughty was tried by the ship's company, found guilty of treason and sentenced to death by beheading. And then, whatever was good in

Doughty came uppermost, for he met his fate gallantly and even gaily. Drake and he knelt side by side to receive Communion and afterwards they both took dinner together as friends—and drank to each other's welfare. When that was over, the procession moved off to where the block was standing ready, and Doughty knelt and prayed for the Queen and for the prosperity of Drake's adventure. Then, after apologizing for the shortness of his neck—as Drake's chaplain, Master Francis Fletcher, says so quaintly in his diary—"he, in quiet sort, laid his head to the block, where he ended his life. This being done," adds the good chaplain, "our General made divers speeches to the whole company, persuading us to unity, obedience, love, and regard of our voyage, and so with good contentment every man went about his business."

They stayed two months at Port St. Julian and during that time met with plenty of Magellan's Patagonian giants, who, the chaplain tells us, were by no means so gigantic as the worthy Pigafetta had made out. Some misunderstanding arose and there was a fight one day, in which one of Drake's gunners was killed. But they all soon made friends again, and Chaplain Fletcher relates that one morning he offered a friendly giant a glass of wine. The effect was simply extraordinary. The smell of it alone knocked the giant down, but he still held on to the glass and kept on sniffing at it until he was quite intoxicated, "from which time," says the good parson, "he took such a liking to wine that, having learned the word, he every morning would come down the mountains with a mighty cry, Wine, Wine, Wine."

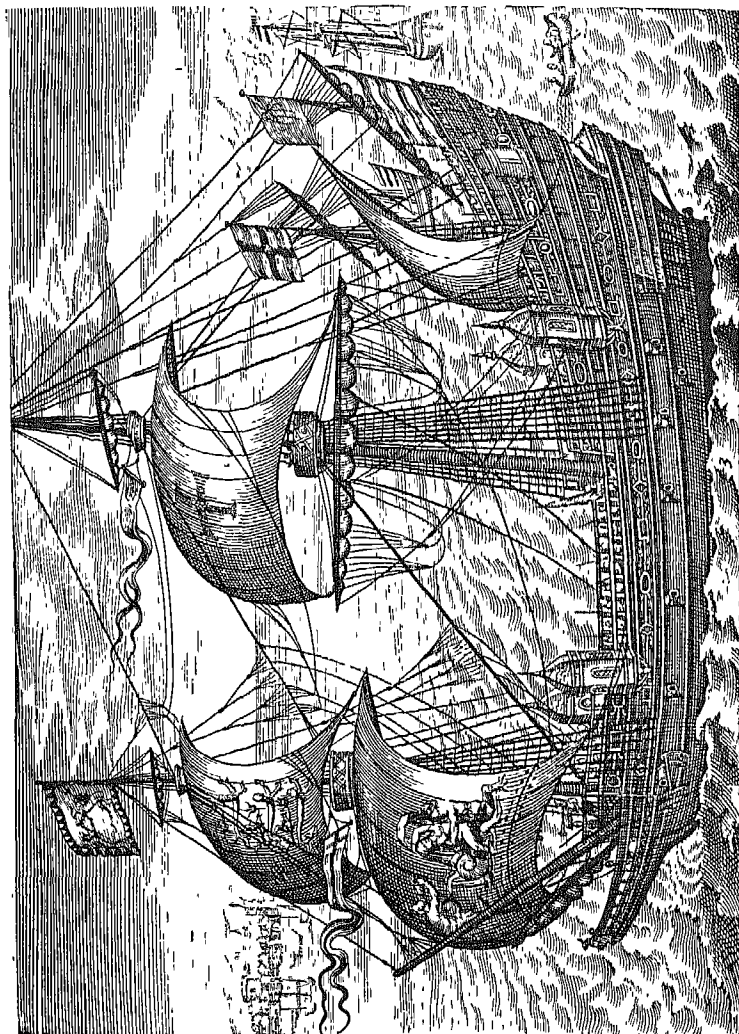
In August the fleet weighed anchor again and three

days later came to the entrance to Magellan's Strait. Here Drake re-christened his flagship, the *Pelican*, with the now immortal name of the *Golden Hind*, and then, turning west, the three little ships sailed into the mouth of the Strait. Three weeks later, after many adventures, they emerged safely at the other side and rippled out into the Pacific Ocean. Plain sailing now, thought Drake, to Peru and to a little game of "cat amongst the pigeons" with the treasure-ships of Spain. But that was not yet to be. A terrific storm came up and whirled them blindly southwards. It lasted for fifty-two days, and before the end of it Drake completely lost sight of the other two ships. As a matter of fact one of them foundered and the other, after sheltering in a harbour for three weeks, turned tail, went back through the Strait and sailed home. So, although Drake was unaware of this till later, he was left with only his own ship, the *Golden Hind*. But, whilst the storm was certainly a piece of bad luck, it was the means of his making a very important geographical discovery. He was blown so far south that he came to what is now called Cape Horn—the very southernmost tip and end of America—and thus he discovered that the two oceans—the Atlantic and the Pacific—merged together, and that America finished just there, and did *not* continue to the South Pole as everyone had imagined. Like the eager boy he was, he landed on the southernmost of all the islands, walked to its extreme tip and, lying down on his stomach, reached out with his hands as far south as ever he could—just for the joy and satisfaction of feeling that at that moment he was further south than anyone else. Then he and the parson set up a stone, on

which they chiselled Queen Elizabeth's name and the date.

Drake's real business, however, was up in Peru, and so, the weather having moderated, he turned the bows of the *Golden Hind* towards the Equator and scudded north. He still hoped to pick up the other two ships at the little island rendezvous off the coast of Chile which he had told them to make for, but when he reached it there was nothing to be seen of them—for a reason that we know. He went ashore with a small party for fresh water, but a crowd of about five hundred Indians suddenly attacked them and Drake was rather badly wounded in the ensuing scuffle. His men, who adored him, wanted to land and teach the Chilians a sharp lesson, but Drake took the sporting view that the natives had, quite naturally, taken them for Spaniards and had therefore, quite rightly, attacked them. To Francis Drake, anyone who was out to attack the hated Spaniards *must* be a good fellow.

On leaving the island, he and his men steered northwards—and then the fun began. They picked up a simple Indian, a-fishing from a canoe, who, thinking they were Spaniards—and who else but Spaniards could possibly be in the Pacific?—told them that at a place called Valparaiso there was a great Spanish treasure-ship laden with gold from the kingdom of Peru. Drake therefore crept up the coast to Valparaiso, and there, sure enough, in the harbour lay the Spaniard all unsuspecting. So unsuspecting, in fact, that when the *Golden Hind* drew alongside, the small harbour-crew of Spanish sailormen, never dreaming for one moment that the new-comer was Drake the Monster—the Terror of the Spanish Main



AN ELIZABETHAN GALLEON

last heard of six years ago on the other side of America—welcomed them with a cheerful rattle of drums and invited them aboard to crack a bottle of wine together. But Thomas Moon, the carpenter, jumped aboard her and cracked their heads together instead, whereupon, sailing her out to sea, Drake rifled her and then turned her loose to sink or swim. Eight thousand pounds' worth of gold and 1,770 jars of wine they took from her, as well as provisions and sundries of every kind.

So they worked steadily northwards, plundering where and when they could, and causing the incredible news to run from Chile to Panama that Drake the Dragon was actually in the Pacific. At one place they espied a Spaniard asleep on the beach with some bars of silver lying beside him, and Drake sent a couple of Devon lads ashore, who very quietly removed the silver without waking him up. Then at last they came to Callao, the harbour of Lima City and the big seaport from which the great Spanish galleons, laden with the gold of the vanished Incas of Peru, sailed to Panama. This was in February of 1579. Drake had no idea what kind of fortifications there were, or whether the citizens had yet heard of his arrival in the Pacific, and therefore he slipped in quietly at night-time—to find five ships at anchor. But they were empty of treasure; the Spaniards had been warned, so he just cut their cables and let them drift ashore all in a heap. All he got out of Lima was the news that a great ship, laden deep with gold, had sailed only a fortnight before for Panama. However, this was sufficient for Francis Drake, and clapping on every sail he had he raced north in pursuit. Once or twice he stopped to question vessels he met, and of course, whilst

he was talking to them, he managed at the same time to help himself to their cargoes; but at last, one afternoon, the look-out in the cross-trees spotted the Spaniard lumbering on ahead. Her captain, never guessing that the little vessel storming along behind him was an enemy, put about and innocently allowed the *Golden Hind* to come alongside. Drake called on him to surrender, and when he refused, immediately let fly with guns and arrows. A lucky shot "strake down her mizzen"; the English lads swarmed over her towering sides, and in less time than it takes to tell it the great vessel surrendered. Drake put a prize crew aboard and took her a hundred miles out to sea and there, in the privacy of empty horizons, he gutted her holds. Great chests of solid bar gold, coffers of silver ingots, strong-boxes full of pearls and emeralds, —more than a million pounds' worth. Never was there such a prize. For four days Drake's ship lay alongside transferring the cargo of treasure. Then he cast off and, waving his hand to the disconsolate Spaniards, set his course again for the north.

Now came the question, what to do next. He had secured all the treasure his little ship could carry; the *Golden Hind* was gorged, and it was time to go home. But which way? He could not go back the way he had come, because, as he had raided north, so the Spaniards had stormed out behind him, and to go south again would be to land himself in a hornet's nest. There were only two other ways he could take, round the north of America by way of the fabled North-West Passage, if there were such a thing, or due west and so right round the world. After thinking things over Drake decided to try the North-West Passage and, in pursuance

of this plan, he did actually get as far north as Vancouver. But the cold was so intense that he abandoned the idea and turned south again. He had not sailed far, however, before the *Golden Hind* sprang a leak, and he was obliged to put in to mend it, just north of San Francisco—the place is known as Drake's Bay to this day. Here he made friends with the North American Indians and, before he left, formally took possession of California in the name of England and his Queen. He even set up a brass plate—"nailed upon a faire great post," says Parson Fletcher—with Queen Elizabeth's name on it, and the date, 1579. He also made a secret hiding-place and put inside it a picture of the Queen together with a lucky sixpence with his own name scratched on the back of it. That was a typically Drakian touch, that lucky sixpence—boyish—the whole thing quite serious, of course, but at the same time a tremendous *lark*!

The route home via the North-West Passage having been abandoned, and the southward track being barred to him owing to the presence of the vengeful Spaniards, the only way left for him to reach England again was by sailing west right round the world. On this great adventure he therefore embarked, heading his little vessel almost due west across the vast Pacific, and at the end of two months he safely reached the Philippines. After a short stay there he voyaged south to the Moluccas, the Spice Islands, where the local Rajah said that if he liked to make a proper treaty he would give him exclusive trading rights in spices for the whole district. But ordinary commerce was not in Drake's line, and he let the opportunity slip. It is rather a pity he did so, because

those rights were extremely valuable, as they are still. The Dutchmen have them now.

Soon after leaving the Spice Islands Drake nearly lost his ship. The *Golden Hind* ran on a coral reef and stuck fast. For twenty-four hours she hung there like a beetle on a pin, and then the wind suddenly changed and blew her off. Parson Fletcher says, "the happy gale—the happy gale drove our ship off the rock into the sea again, to the no little comfort of all our hearts." And so, after crossing the Indian Ocean and rounding the Cape of Good Hope, they came in safety at last to Plymouth Sound, after an absence of nearly three years—Drake being thus the first Englishman to sail right round the world.

It was on a Sunday morning when the *Golden Hind*, laden deep with Spanish treasure, rippled into Plymouth harbour, and it is to be feared that on shore the preacher's sermon was spoiled that Sabbath morn, for news somehow filtered into the church that Frankie Drake and his lads were home from the sea. The thrilling whisper passed from pew to pew, and first one and then another of the congregation rose quietly and stole out, until the parson, suddenly looking up, found himself addressing empty benches—upon observing which it is said that the good man hurriedly pronounced the Doxology and, picking up his skirts, followed his flock down to the sunlit quay.

CHAPTER SIX

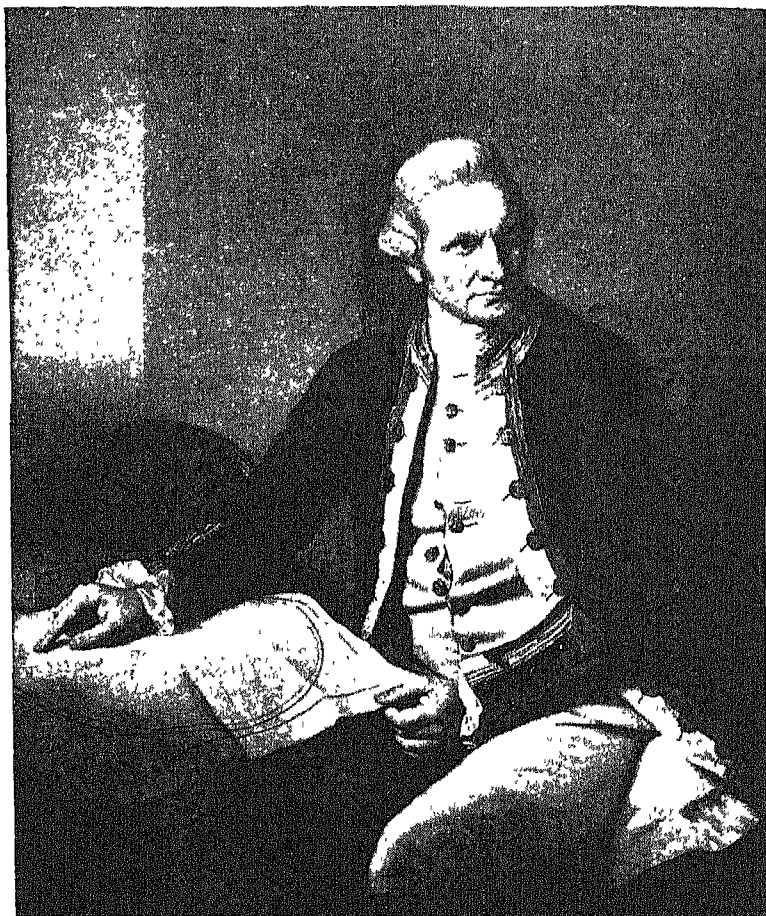
CAPTAIN COOK'S THREE VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY

DURING the two hundred years that followed Drake's voyage—the first made by an Englishman around the world—discovery proceeded apace and a great deal of the mystery of the outlines of all the great continents was cleared up. Englishmen explored most of the coastlines of North America; the Spaniards mapped the shores of Central and Southern America; the Portuguese voyaged along the coasts of Africa, and both Spaniards and Portuguese discovered a great deal about India, China and the great tropical islands where grew the spices so highly esteemed in Europe.

The one doubt that remained in people's minds was whether there really was or was not another great continent lying somewhere between Southern America or Southern Africa on the one hand, and the South Pole on the other. This problem was solved by our Captain James Cook. This greatest of all English sailor-explorers not only sailed round the world three times, but also discovered New Zealand, found and explored the eastern coast of Australia and mapped scores of hitherto unknown groups of Pacific islands. Moreover he sailed far north into the Arctic seas and, at the other end of the earth, reached to within nineteen degrees of the South Pole itself.

Here, in his case, we meet with something quite new in the way of motives. Pizarro, Magellan and

even Drake himself fared forth in search of *wealth* in one form or another; it was the material aspect of



A PORTRAIT OF CAPTAIN COOK BY DANCE
The original hangs in the Royal Naval Hospital, Greenwich

geographical discovery that lured them forward. But it was the pure longing for knowledge, the scientific urge,

that was the underlying motive of Captain Cook's wonderful voyages.

Young James learnt his navigation in a hard school: in a Whitby collier knocking up and down the east coast; a very hard school indeed, even to-day, and much more so when he was a lad, two hundred years ago. Cook was a Yorkshireman. He was born in a little mud cottage in the village of Marton, which lies at the foot of the Cleveland hills, in the North Riding. That was in the year 1728, just over two hundred years ago. When he was thirteen years of age he was apprenticed to a grocer, but the longing for the sea was in his blood, so that a year or two later he joined the crew of a coal boat, and thereafter, for the next twelve or thirteen years, knocked around the North Sea, learning—learning all he could of seamanship and navigation. In 1755, when sailors were badly wanted for the war against France, Cook, then a young man of twenty-seven, happened to be in the Thames and offered his services. Four years later he was sent to America and made a name for himself at the siege of Quebec by charting the intricate channels of the St. Lawrence River under the very guns of the French.

So, when the Royal Society decided to send a scientific expedition to Tahiti, one of the Society Islands in the Pacific, to observe the approaching transit of Venus, who more suitable for the command than Lieutenant James Cook? For he was not only a clever map-maker and a trained astronomical observer, but also a fine seaman, and moreover, which was quite as important, a born leader of men and accustomed to command them. Stern, strict, yet just and honest,

Cook was almost worshipped by those who served under him.

For this expedition, his first voyage, Cook chose as his ship a coasting vessel, a collier of 360 tons named the *Endeavour*, and he sailed from Plymouth Sound on August 25, 1768. Five months later he reached Tierra del Fuego at the extreme southern end of South America, and then, sailing westward ho! across the Pacific, for many weeks neither he nor his men caught a glimpse of any land at all. Have you ever noticed, on a globe of the world, the vast size of the Pacific Ocean? The next time you have an opportunity, take a look at it; you will probably be surprised. Viewed from a certain angle, the whole visible world seems to be just all blue sea. And it speaks volumes for Cook's seamanship that on June 11th the good ship *Endeavour* arrived safely at Tahiti, his objective. He stayed there a considerable time, getting on quite well with the natives, but most of them were shocking thieves, and as a result there was a certain amount of trouble, which, however, soon blew over.

Cook's orders from the Royal Society were, first of all, to observe the transit of Venus from the island, and then to sail south and explore. Because, even as recently as two hundred years ago, the geography of the South Pacific was practically a closed book. Dutchmen had sighted the western coasts of New Zealand, but the general impression seemed to be that it was merely part of a great unknown Southland continent that stretched right across the South polar regions. So, after he had observed the transit, Cook sailed away south from Tahiti to look for the coast of this mythical Southland, but,

finding no trace of it, turned westward and, after sighting and visiting several South Sea Islands, discovered—well here is what he says in his own diary:

“On the next day, Friday, October 6th, we saw land from the mast-head bearing West by North, and stood directly for it; in the evening it could just be discerned from the deck and appeared large. On the 7th it fell calm and we therefore approached the land slowly. . . . It appeared still larger . . . with four or five ranges of hills, one over the other, and a chain of mountains above all, which appeared to be of enormous height. This land became the subject of much eager conversation; but the general opinion seemed to be that we had found the *terra australis incognita*.”

In point of fact, what he had found was the east coast of New Zealand. He sailed southwards along the shore-line as far as a point which he named Cape Turn Again, and here he reversed his direction and went right round the North Island in an anti-clockwise direction until he found himself back at Cape Turn Again once more, in this way discovering that the northern part of New Zealand was an island, divided by a strip of water—which he named Cook Strait—from the mass of land to the south. Then, making careful maps all the time, he proceeded to explore the coast-line of this southern mass and, by sailing right round it, found that it, too, was an island like its northern neighbour, and therefore was no part of any supposed Southland continent. The natives they encountered from time to time varied: some

were shy and friendly, a few were distinctly hostile, and most of them were cannibals. He refers to them in his



diary as "Indians," for in those days anyone with a dark skin was labelled at once as an "Indian."

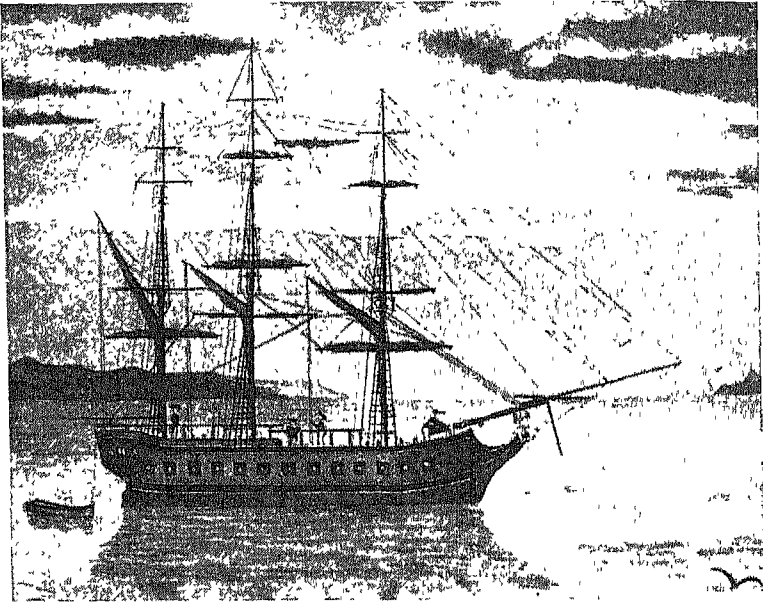
His work done, he decided to return home westwards by way of the East Indies. Now he knew already, from the work of previous Dutch explorers, that there was a great mass of land somewhere to the west, Australia, but whether he could get round the north of it to Java he had no idea. So, leaving New Zealand—and naming the last point of land Cape Farewell, which name it bears to this day—he sailed westward again, and three weeks later sighted a point on the east coast of Australia. He says in his diary: “I judged it to lie in latitude 38 degrees, and gave it the name of Point Hicks, because Mr. Hicks, the first lieutenant, was the first who discovered it.” He coasted north and landed at a place just south of Sydney, which he named Botany Bay, because of the many new kinds of plants he found there—and, incidentally, it must be rather a difficult business finding names for all the features of a new continent.

A moment ago we mentioned Dutch explorers. As a matter of fact, quite a number of Dutchmen had already visited the *western* side of Australia—they named it New Holland—but they found that it apparently consisted of a vast barren wilderness, no good at all from a commercial point of view, or so they thought, and for this reason did not trouble to follow up their discoveries. It is more than possible that the history of the world would have been very different if they had discovered the *other* side of Australia, the fertile and commercially valuable eastern coast. But it is no good thinking of the “what might have been,” because, luckily, our own Captain Cook found it.

From Botany Bay he sailed northwards along the coast, making careful maps, nearly got wrecked on the Great

Barrier Reef, and finally reached the extreme northern tip of the continent at Cape York. This is what he writes about it:

“As I was now about to quit the eastern coast of New Holland, which I had coasted from latitude 38 degrees to



CAPTAIN COOK'S SHIP THE *RESOLUTION*

this place, and which I am confident no European had seen before, I once more hoisted English colours, and though I had already taken possession of several particular parts, I now took possession of the whole eastern coast . . . in the right of His Majesty King George the Third, by the name of New South Wales.” He called it “New South Wales” because it reminded him of the country round

about Swansea. Cook then sailed towards the west again through Torres Straits, thus proving that Australia was quite separate from New Guinea, and at last, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, anchored once more in the Downs on July 13, 1771. He had been away nearly three years, and had sailed right round the world.

During this first voyage, then, he had found that New Zealand consisted of two separate islands, had discovered the whole eastern coast of Australia, and had made accurate charts of both lands. But even so the question of the existence of a great Antarctic continent was still more or less unsettled, and so, in the following year, Captain Cook was sent once more to look for this elusive Southland. He was given two new ships—the *Resolution* and the *Adventure*—and his old *Endeavour* went back to her collier work in the North Sea. This time Cook sailed straight south, past the Cape of Good Hope, and then proceeded to do a sort of zigzag journey round the South Pole, poking his bowsprit as far south as he could get, in every direction, and only sheering off when he came up against solid ice. Search as he would, however, he found no great Southland continent. In the gales and fogs the two vessels became separated and lost each other, and eventually the *Adventure* returned to England—when Cook reached home again he found she had been back for nearly a year. But Cook himself, in the *Resolution*, remained, and was away for about three years on this second voyage of his: searching the South Polar Seas for the phantom continent and dodging about in the South Pacific,⁸ discovering and mapping the position of various South Sea Island groups such as New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, the New Hebrides, the

Tongas and so on, not forgetting Easter Island, where there are those enormous and mysterious stone images—two of which, by the way, have been brought to England and may be seen on the terrace, on either side of the main entrance to the British Museum.

In this second voyage Cook satisfied himself that there was no great continent lying round the South Pole. But he did something more than this, something perhaps even more important. He mastered the great curse of scurvy, and at that time scurvy was a disease that often carried off half a ship's company on a long voyage. Cold baths, personal cleanliness, and a careful diet—that was his prescription. He adopted it himself, and saw to it that all his crew did the same, with the remarkable result that not a single one of his men died from this complaint. In fact, during the three years that he was away—for he reached England safely again in 1775—he only lost four of his crew out of a total of 118, and three of those died by accident.

Captain James Cook was now a man of forty-eight, with a magnificent record behind him. If anyone had earned a rest, surely he had. But he was still as keen as ever, and when the question of the North-West Passage cropped up again—it was probably the only other great geographical problem that remained to be solved—he offered his services to Lord Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, and was at once accepted. Davis and Hudson and Baffin and many others had tried to find a North-East passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific round the north of America, working from the east towards the west, through Hudson's Bay. But they had failed, and so Cook was instructed to try to get through from the

other side; that is, to start from the North Pacific Ocean and work eastwards towards the Atlantic.

He sailed from Plymouth on July 11, 1776, on his third and, as it turned out, his last voyage. He used his old ship, the *Resolution*, and, rounding Cape Horn, reached New Zealand safely seven months later. From here he made his way north, visiting Tahiti on the way, and re-discovering the Hawaiian group, which he named the Sandwich Islands, in honour of the First Lord of the Admiralty. The natives that came aboard stole everything they could lay their hands on, particularly metal. Captain Cook remarks:

“Before we left the place, hardly a bit of brass was left in the ship. Whole suits of clothes were stripped of every button, copper kettles, tin canisters, candlesticks, all went to wreck, so that these people got a greater variety of things from us than any other people we had visited.”

In March of 1778 he sighted the western coast-line of North America, somewhere near Vancouver Island, and proceeded to cruise northward up the coast, until at last he reached and passed through Bering Strait, only to find his further progress blocked by thick ice. He examined the coast-lines, however, and incidentally found that the two great continents of Asia and America are separated by a strip of water only thirty-six miles across. But it was now getting rather late in the year, so he decided to return south to the Sandwich Islands and to winter there. He reached the island of Hawaii in November, and anchored in Karakakua Bay.

Now it seems that, amongst the islanders of Hawaii, there was a tradition that a local god named Rono had sailed away one day, promising to return in due course on a floating island, equipped with coconuts, pigs and dogs. When Captain Cook arrived, the High Priest declared that he was no other than the god Rono in person, and in consequence the entire population greeted him as a god. They went down on their knees whenever he showed himself and the priests aimed long-winded speeches at him on the slightest provocation. Thus everything went well, except for a good deal of thieving.

After a while Cook decided to move on to another island, but he had not gone far before his ship, the *Resolution*, sprang a leak, and he had to put back for repairs. But this time, to his intense surprise, the natives received him in a very hostile manner. They began to throw stones and one of the ship's boats was stolen, so that with one thing and another, Cook decided to seize the King or one of the chiefs, and hold him as a kind of hostage until he got his boat back. The King himself, when the time came, was quite willing to go, but some of the chiefs and one of his wives objected. Cook was in a hurry and began to walk towards the shore, when suddenly a native ran up and aimed a blow at him with an iron bar. Cook, in self-defence, shot him—and then pandemonium broke loose. A mob of excited natives surrounded the Captain, who was pulled down, dragged along the beach and stabbed to death. The sailors tried their best to recover the body, but it was not until many days later that the natives handed over all that was left of it, the head and the two hands.

^ So died, on February 14, 1779, in the fifty-second year

of his age, Captain James Cook, a very gallant English gentleman, one of the greatest of all scientific navigators, and the man who not only set the foot of Britain firmly in New Zealand and Australia, but did much to make accurate and complete our knowledge of the world and its great island continents. ♡

CHAPTER SEVEN

MUNGO PARK IN NORTH-WEST AFRICA

LITTLE by little, as has been seen, the coasts of the world's great land-masses were thus discovered and mapped out; but, of course, it is one thing to sail along the shores of a new country and quite another to land and, beset on all sides by savages and wild beasts, to march inland through forests and swamps to discover what lies in the interior of the land-masses. And although it lies, so to speak, almost next door to Europe, the great continent of Africa has been one of the very last to yield up the secret of its enormous rivers, its vast lakes, its towering mountain ranges and the dense forests that lie within its widespread borders.

Even to-day nearly one-eleventh of Africa is still unexplored; but just over one hundred and fifty years ago, when Captain Cook met his death in the Sandwich Islands, practically the whole of its interior was completely unknown. It so happened, however, that in the year before he died—in 1778 to be precise—some people in England formed a society named the African Association. The main object of this society was the exploration of Africa, but, combined with this, there was also quite a definite trading and imperial motive, because England had just lost her American Colonies, and our merchant-adventurers were therefore beginning to look around for new opportunities in other lands.

The first undertaking of the African Association was the exploration of the River Niger, the third largest



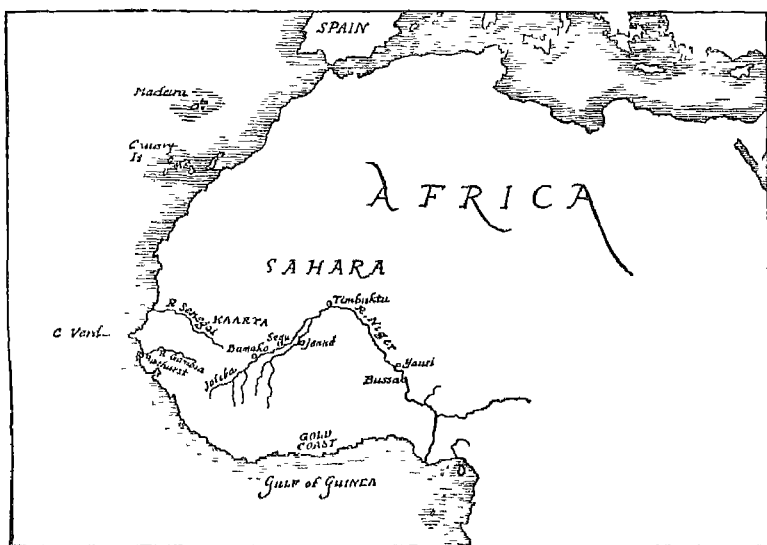
MUNGO PARK

river in Africa. People knew already that there was such a river, because the whole country through which it ran was the happy hunting-ground of the Moorish slave-traders who brought their black "merchandise" down to the coast to sell to white traders, who, in turn, shipped them in boatloads over to the Southern States of America. Slave-trading was, at that time and for many years after, a very flourishing and profitable business; it is said that something like a hundred thousand slaves passed through the hands of these white coast-traders every year.

As has been said, the River Niger was known to exist, but where it began, where it ended, and which way it ran, no one had the faintest idea, and the African Association determined to find out. But the first explorer they sent, John Ledyard, died in Cairo before he really got started; the second, working from the north, was unable to cross the Sahara; the third managed to cross the desert but died on the Niger and left no records, and the fourth, Major David Houghton, was equally unlucky. He entered Africa by the River Gambia on the west coast and, working eastwards, ultimately fell into the hands of the Moors. Shortly afterwards he died, whether from starvation or from their ill-treatment is not clear. Thus four attempts, three from the north and one from the west, had failed, and the Association looked round for someone to make a fifth venture.

The opportunity produced the man. A young Scotsman named Mungo Park, a ship's surgeon only twenty-three years old, volunteered for the job and was accepted. He left England in 1795 with a letter of credit for £200 in his pocket and, like Major Houghton, he chose

to enter Africa by the Gambia River, which flows into the sea on the extreme western coast of Africa, just south of Cape Verde. The town of Bathurst now lies at its mouth, as the map shows. And whilst you are looking at the map just notice what a curious river the Niger is. You see, it rises quite close to the Atlantic coast



on the west, wanders north-east towards Timbuktu and the Sahara, then turns due east, then south-east, and finally, flowing due south, joins the sea right in the corner of the Gulf of Guinea, 2,500 miles from where it started. No wonder its course was a mystery.

Having arrived safely at the mouth of the Gambia, Mungo Park travelled by boat two hundred miles up-stream to a place named Pisania, the last outpost of white traders up-river, and here he stayed for six months learning the native language. Then, on December 3rd,

he set out on his travels. He travelled light. All he took with him were some pistols and firearms, provisions for two days, some amber, tobacco and beads, with which to buy more food with; a sextant, a compass, a thermometer, and a blue cotton umbrella. His party consisted of two negro servants mounted on donkeys, while he himself rode a small wiry horse, for which he had paid the sum of £7 10s.

They travelled eastwards with a little of north in it, and for a time all went well. He tells us that when he arrived at one village he saw, hanging on a tree, a queer-looking fancy-dress costume made of bark, and on enquiry was told that this belonged to Mumbo Jumbo. Further questioning revealed the fact that each local native kept as many wives as he could afford and, of course, as a result, each household was a nest of intrigue and spitefulness. When things got *too* bad in any one family, the aggrieved husband, or one of his friends, would slip away into the bush, dress up in the Mumbo Jumbo costume, and reappear at nightfall, howling dismally and carrying a big stick. All the tribe thereupon gathered at the communal meeting-place. For the women it was an anxious occasion because, since the identity of Mumbo Jumbo was entirely unknown, every married female with a guilty conscience felt in her bones that trouble was in store for her. After a song and dance, Mumbo Jumbo announced the name of the offending wife, who was thereupon promptly seized, stripped, and given a good hiding. Mungo Park, probably with a twinkle in his eye, wrote in his diary, "it was remarked that the rest of the women were the loudest of all in their shouts of derision against their unhappy sister." And

then, remembering his pious Scotch upbringing, he adds, "Daylight puts an end to this indecent and unmanly revel."

Owing to a war between two neighbouring tribes, Park had to make a wide detour, and by so doing he, like the unfortunate Houghton, fell into the hands of the Moors, who half starved him, carried him about from place to place, and treated him like a dog. There was no possible indignity they did not heap upon him. Sometimes they would not even give him water, and on one occasion the only way he could get it was to go down on his hands and knees and drink with the cows from the filthy cattle-trough. Even the touch of his lips on a water-jar was considered by the fanatical Moors to be pollution. Pizarro, the Christian, looked upon the unbaptized natives of Peru as dogs and heathens and treated them like dirt. The Moors treated Mungo Park in exactly the same way, but for precisely the opposite reason, namely, because he *was* a Christian.

At last, after four months' captivity, he managed to escape on his horse, and although he was chased he got away. But during the next day both he and his horse nearly died of hunger and thirst. The pitiless sun beat down on him, and at last he fell in a dead faint on the sand. Luckily, however, in the evening a storm came and revived him. He spread out his clothes in the rain, and by sucking the moisture out of them managed to ease his thirst. Then he staggered to his feet and leading his skin-and-bone horse struggled forward in the darkness. A little before daylight he heard some frogs croaking and found a pool so full of them that he could scarcely see the water. But he drove them away with a stick,

and then both he and his horse drank deep of the muddy liquid. Thereafter he pushed on day after day, sometimes walking up and down all night to scare away prowling lions, and at other times paying for a night's lodging with one of the brass buttons from his waistcoat

After a while he fell in with a party of negroes on their way to a town named Segou, a town of thirty thousand inhabitants, which, so they told him, lay on the banks of the River Niger itself. The great river!—after all his misfortunes it looked as if the luck were changing at last. On the night before they reached Segou, Park was so excited that he could not sleep a wink, and he was up and ready to go long before dawn. They started at daybreak, and presently, ahead of them, they saw the grey smoke from the huts of Segou drifting lazily upwards in the morning air. And beyond lay—well, here are his own words: “Looking forward I saw with infinite pleasure the great object of my mission, the long-sought-for, majestic Niger, glittering to the morning sun, as broad as the Thames at Westminster and flowing slowly”—and he heavily underlines these words—“*to the eastward.*”

It was on July 20, 1796, that Park reached the Niger, and that first glimpse of it settled one important point, at any rate, namely, that it ran towards the east. So far so good. Now to follow it downstream. Timbuktu lay ahead, that mysterious city about which so many extraordinary tales had already reached Europe. Park determined to push on. But it was easier said than done. Here he was, with a beard that reached to his waist, thin and weak with fever and privation, possessing only the ragged clothes he stood up in and a skin-and-bone

horse that was too weak to carry him. He wanted to cross the river, but the local King would not let him do so. Instead the King sent him a native guide and five thousand cowrie shells, worth about 20s. in our money, and told him to go away. With this unexpected wealth, therefore, Park and the guide pushed on down the river, sometimes walking along the banks, and once or twice travelling a little way by canoe. But the going became increasingly difficult, owing to the rains, and the mosquitoes nearly bit him to death. Finally his horse fell down completely exhausted, and Park says: "I sat down beside this worn-out associate of my adventures, but finding him still unable to rise I took off the saddle and bridle and placed a quantity of grass before him. I surveyed the poor animal, as he lay panting on the ground, with sympathetic emotion; for I could not suppress the sad apprehension that I should myself in a short time lie down and perish, in the same manner, of fatigue and hunger."

He left his horse and walked on, carrying the saddle, to a nearby village where he stored it. Then his guide, abandoning him, turned back, and Park was left all alone. He struggled on gallantly for a day or so and then he sat down and took stock of his position. The rainy season had already started; he was practically naked; he was exhausted with fever and lack of food; he had spent practically all his cowrie money—in fact, he was down and out. To have continued would have been worse than foolish. Even to try to get back to the Gambia River, five hundred miles away, looked impossible—but it was the only thing to do if the records of the work he had already accomplished were to reach civilization.

Accordingly he returned to the village where he had left the saddle, and finding that a native was travelling westward too, Park went along with him and got him to carry the saddle. But by and by the pair of them came to the spoor of a lion, whereupon the native politely requested Park to walk in front. Park declined with thanks, and the negro, losing his temper, threw down the saddle and disappeared into the bush. The situation had its humorous side, perhaps, though no doubt poor Mungo Park, alone in the middle of Africa, with a perfectly good saddle and no horse to put it on, failed to see the joke. However, having no further use for it, Park threw the saddle into the river, and immediately the negro, who had been hiding in the bushes, jumped in, fished it out on the end of his spear and ran away with it. Park managed to dodge the lion and reached a village in the late afternoon, only to find that the native had arrived there before him and dumped the saddle, being afraid that Park would complain to the local King about the theft. So there was the saddle once more—although not much use without the horse. But wonders never cease. Whilst Park was talking to the headman, he heard a horse neigh in one of the huts—and there was his Rosinante, his faithful steed! It had recovered and, wandering around, had found the village.

Next morning Park set out again, driving his horse before him. But things got worse and worse. One day he was set upon by robbers, who stripped him absolutely naked, and were just going off when one of them, more decent than the rest, threw back to him his trousers, a shirt and his hat, in the crown of which he kept his precious diary. But they took everything else, including

his horse, and that was nearly the end of Mungo Park. Just consider his position. He was five hundred miles from the nearest European settlement, empty handed, practically naked and quite alone, surrounded by savage animals and men still more savage. Apparently a hopeless prospect. But he pulled himself together and, turning his face towards the setting sun, walked on, arriving in the evening at a village where the chief not only received him kindly, but actually sent after the robbers and managed to recover for him both his clothes and his precious horse, which, however, promptly went and fell down the village well. It took the united efforts of the whole community to pull it out, and as by this time the poor beast was like a skeleton, Park, on leaving the village, presented it to the chief, complete with saddle. And, so far as Park was concerned, that was the end of the £7 10s. horse.

Not many days later he fell in with a negro merchant named Karfa, who also treated him well, for when Park went down with a bad attack of fever Karfa nursed him for five weeks and then, when he was better, took him all the way back, five hundred miles, to the Gambia River, along with a batch of slaves he wanted to sell to the white men there. And so Park reached Pisania, his starting-place, once more, after an absence of eighteen months. From there he shipped as surgeon on an American slave-ship, and after further adventures, including a shipwreck, arrived back in England on December 22, 1797. He had been away for two years and seven months, and had been through enough hardships, one would think, to last any ordinary man for the rest of his life. Apparently he thought so, too,

at the time, because he got married and settled down as a doctor in Peebles.

But Africa was in his blood, and when a second expedition was sent out to the Niger in 1804 Mungo Park was its leader. But this time there was quite a party of them. Park had with him nearly forty Europeans and almost as many donkeys. It was a big mistake, because only two or three of his companions were of any use, and the rest were merely an added care on his shoulders.

He started, as before, from Pisanía on the Gambia River and retraced the route by which he had returned with Karfa's slave-caravan eight years previously. It was in the month of May 1805 when the expedition started off, and very soon afterwards the rainy season set in, with the result that men began to fall out with fever and illness. The Niger was sighted at last on August 18th, but of the "34 soldiers and 4 carpenters who left the Gambia, only 6 soldiers and 1 carpenter reached the Niger." All the rest had either died or been left behind to recover. Park did the work of ten men, holding sick men on their horses, carrying their baggage, going back for them when they fell out, fighting off wild beasts and the hordes of thieves who all the time hung on their flanks, as well as swimming rivers—once he swam a crocodile-infested river sixteen times in succession, convoying the donkeys across and the baggage of his party. It is an epic story of grit and endurance which can be read in full in Park's own diary published under the title *Travels in the Interior District of Africa*. I commend it to you as a most fascinating and inspiring story.

The expedition, now sadly reduced in numbers, followed the river for a short distance, and then Park

constructed a large canoe, 40 feet long and 6 feet wide, out of the best portions of two other canoes. This he christened H.M.S. *Joliba*, Joliba being the native name for the Niger. In this canoe he and the remnants of his party embarked with the intention of sailing right down the Niger to its end, but before he pushed off he sent his faithful guide, Isaacs, back to civilization with his diary. It is well that he did so, for nothing more was ever heard from Mungo Park. Some years later it was discovered that he and his companions had been attacked from the shore by hostile natives, and that in attempting to escape they had all been drowned, at the Boussa Rapids, nearly one thousand miles down river, not very far from the present town of Gao, which keeps coming up in the news because it is a petrol-filling station for aviators on their flights to and from the Cape.

Thus ended the short but brilliant career of Mungo Park. In two heroic journeys he accomplished more in the way of practical discovery than any man before him in Africa for one hundred and fifty years, and if he failed to solve all the problems of the mysterious River Niger, he at least went a great part of the way. His grit and endurance were unbreakable.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LIVINGSTONE IN CENTRAL AFRICA

IN these modern days of radio, aeroplanes and swift travel we are liable to take it for granted, without thinking, that the actual exploration of unknown lands took place long, long ago—that men like Livingstone, for instance, belong somehow to the dim and distant past. And yet there must be thousands of people living to-day who were contemporaries of Livingstone, and who can still remember the tremendous excitement caused by his discoveries in Darkest Africa. For David Livingstone only died in 1873, some sixty years ago.

Mungo Park and those who followed him solved the problem of the Niger in North-West Africa; the four great explorers—Bruce, Burton, Speke and Baker—each and severally traced the course of the Nile almost to its source and made many other discoveries in North-East Africa, but less than seventy years ago practically the whole of Central Africa was still a closed book. It was Livingstone who explored and mapped out the greater part of this vast area.

David Livingstone, like Mungo Park, was a Scotsman, born at Blantyre, where, by the way, his birthplace has quite recently been purchased and turned into a memorial; a memorial which year by year is becoming increasingly a great national shrine. He came of very humble parents—his father sold tea from door to door—but, studying in his spare moments, he graduated as a doctor in Glasgow before joining a man named Robert

Moffat in Africa as a medical missionary, in the year 1841, when he was twenty-eight years old.



DAVID LIVINGSTONE

Moffat, also a Scotsman, had already been out in Africa for twenty years, and was living at a place named Kuruman, seven hundred miles north of Cape Town. In those days, when the interior of Africa was absolutely unknown, Kuruman was considered to be "at the back

of beyond." Even so, it was not far enough for young David, who used to stand and gaze north over the veld, wondering what lay beyond the horizon.

It was whilst he was still at Kuruman, helping Moffat, that Livingstone had his famous encounter with the lion. He saw a lion sitting on a rock about thirty yards away and fired both barrels of his gun at it. The lion, although badly wounded, sprang at him, caught him by the shoulder and knocked him down. In his account of the incident Livingstone says: "Growling horribly, the lion shook me as a terrier does a rat. The shock produced a stupor similar to that which seems to be felt by a mouse after the first gripe of a cat. It caused a sort of dreaminess. As he had one paw on the back of my head, I turned round to relieve myself of the weight." At that moment one of the natives fired at the lion and another threw a spear at it, whereupon it left Livingstone, and after chewing up both natives, fell dead. But the bone of Livingstone's arm, from the shoulder to the elbow, was crushed to pieces, and for the rest of his life that arm was partially disabled by the formation of what surgeons call a "false joint."

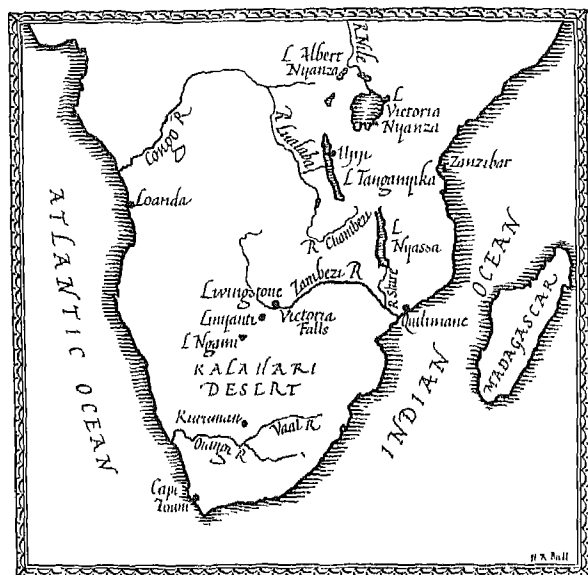
A year after his adventure with the lion he married Robert Moffat's daughter, Mary, and in 1847 they moved to a place on the edge of the Kalahari desert, about two hundred and fifty miles north of Kuruman. And it was whilst he was living there with his wife and family—they had three boys and one girl—that some natives told him about a mysterious lake in the desert, far away to the north-west. They also told him that beyond the desert there was a rich and thickly populated country, where there were so many rivers that they could not be

counted. Until then all the world believed that the centre of Africa was just a sandy desert into which rivers ran and were lost, and the journey that Livingstone made to Lake Ngami—the “mysterious” lake—was the first of those amazing explorations of his which led to the discovery of the real nature of Central Africa.

Roughly speaking, Livingstone's travels of discovery may be divided into three periods, each of about seven years' duration: the first during which he crossed Africa from east to west; the second, lasting from 1858 to 1864, in which he explored the Zambezi River and discovered Lake Nyassa; and the third and last expedition, in which he went searching for the elusive sources of the Nile and died in the attempt. Only during the first period of the three, from 1849 to 1856, was he officially speaking a missionary, for at the end of that period he resigned. His second and third expeditions were financed in the cause of science and exploration by the British Government and by learned societies. But he never made any money out of Africa. It is rather interesting to note, in passing, that whereas the two books that Livingstone wrote brought him in not more than £12,000, H. M. Stanley, who was sent to find him when he was not really lost, is supposed to have received from his publishers for all the books that *he* wrote about Africa more than £80,000.

During the first period the London Missionary Society paid Livingstone £100 a year, and this of course ceased when he resigned. But though he resigned, David Livingstone was always a missionary at heart, though not of the fanatic and narrow-minded type. As a matter of fact, right from the start, he found it difficult to get

on with the missionaries already working in Cape Colony, and the fact that he could not get on with the particular missionary who was supposed to be his colleague was one of the chief reasons why he and his wife left Kuruman and moved two hundred and fifty miles north.



He and his wife now being in such an advanced post, their house was sometimes used by hunters as a jumping-off place for the big game country beyond, and two of these sportsmen, named Oswell and Murray, joined him in his attempt to reach the mysterious lake in the desert, about which the natives had told him. Now, the Kalahari desert is not like the Sahara. There is certainly a great deal of sand, white sand, but it is covered with grass and shrubs, and, sixty years ago, was absolutely infested with big game: elephants by the hundred,

rhinoceroses, lions, leopards and antelopes. It took Livingstone and his two hunter friends exactly two months to cross the desert and to reach the lake, thus seen for the first time by Europeans. This discovery was not in itself a tremendously important one, but it definitely marks the beginning of David Livingstone's explorations.

Next year he and Oswell revisited the lake, and in the following year, while exploring to the north of it, made a second and very valuable discovery—that of the Zambezi River. Long ago—hundreds of years ago—the Portuguese had discovered the Zambezi where it flows into the Indian Ocean on the east coast of Africa, and had even travelled a long way up it in boats, but the part that Livingstone reached, 1,200 miles from the sea, had never been seen before by a white man.

Livingstone was now fairly launched on his career as an explorer, and in order to devote himself more freely to it, he returned south to his mission station, took his wife and family all the way to Cape Town and sent them home to England. Then, travelling laboriously by bullock-wagon, he made his way back, fourteen hundred miles, to the native town of Linyanti, right in the very heart of the continent. Here he made friends with the local chief, and, so far as he could by himself, did good work amongst the natives. But he soon realized that the paramount need was a route to the coast, so that trade goods could be brought in and the whole district thus opened up as a preliminary to permanent mission stations. So he set out with twenty-seven natives and, travelling up the main stream of the Zambezi, crossed to the Congo basin. In February 1854, after a terrible

journey over mountains and through dense forests, he at last reached the west coast at St. Paul de Loanda. The natives with him were flabbergasted when they first saw the Atlantic Ocean, and one of them said: "We were marching along with our father, believing that what the old men had always told us was true, that the world had no end: but all at once the world said to us, 'I am finished: there is no more of me.'" Livingstone himself was nearly down and out with malaria, in fact he could hardly sit on the ox which carried him over the last bit of the journey. But after a short rest he set off back again, and returning by easy stages, safely, though with great difficulty, reached Linyanti once more.

Ten weeks later he began another journey, this time towards the east, *down* the Zambezi. And less than a week after he started he discovered that the whole river toppled over a tremendous precipice, the Victoria Falls, the greatest cataract in the world, nearly two and a half times higher than Niagara. The whole river, nearly half a mile wide, pours down into a narrow slot in the ground four hundred feet deep, and then flows along a narrow zigzag gorge in a churning white mass, providing one of the most wonderful sights you can imagine. Nowadays a railway bridge crosses the gorge just below the Falls and a few miles above them is a flourishing town which has been named Livingstone.

Three and a half months later, after many adventures, Livingstone reached the east coast at Quilimane, at the mouth of the Zambezi, having done what no other white man had ever accomplished—travelled 4,300 miles, mostly on foot, right across Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean. "As a result of this journey,"

he says, "the fabulous torrid zone of parched and burning sand, which Central Africa was supposed to be, was now proved to be a well-watered region resembling North America in its freshwater lakes and India in its hot humid jungles and cool highland plains." He reached Quilimane in May of 1856. Four years had passed since he had seen his wife and family off to England—four years during which he had travelled more than eleven thousand miles—so he himself now decided to return to England for a short holiday.

Travelling by way of Mauritius, he reached London in December of 1856. And when he arrived he found himself famous, not only with the general public because of the romance of his amazing journeys, but with the scientists because of the wealth and accuracy of his geographical work. His notes, written up daily, record every main point of geography, physical structure and climate, full details of all the animals, birds, flowers, trees and plants he met with, accurate astronomical observations—in fact everything that is required of the trained explorer. He did not forget the great question of trade either, for he brought back and exhibited to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce many new kinds of fruit, secret vegetable dyes and a lot of native fibres hitherto unheard of. He urged traders to go out and open up this vast new country he had discovered for them.

He was home for just over a year, and when he went back to Africa it was no longer as a missionary, but as British Consul for all Eastern and Central Africa at the head of a well-equipped Government expedition, of which the most important member, after Livingstone himself, was Dr. John Kirk. But almost from the very

start everything went wrong with this expedition. The Portuguese on the Zambezi had no love for Livingstone; he had said some fairly strong things about their slave-trading activities, and consequently they put all kinds of difficulties in his way. The expedition's steam-launch, the *Ma-Robert*, was such a failure that someone christened her H.M.S. *Asthmatic*, and, above all, Livingstone himself was peevish and irritable with his companions. As a matter of fact, he never could work well with other people; like Kipling's cat, he liked to "walk alone." His brother Charles, who was of the party, was also a cause of trouble. From all accounts, Brother Charles was a difficult person, with an opinion of his own importance out of all proportion to his real merits.

However, during the six years that this expedition stayed in Africa, Livingstone made several journeys up and down the Zambezi. He explored a new river, the Shiré, which joins the Zambezi about one hundred miles from its mouth, and finally, to quote his own words, "we discovered Lake Nyassa a little before noon of September 16, 1859." Lake Nyassa is three hundred and fifty miles long, from fifteen to fifty miles wide, very deep, and surrounded by high mountains with plateaus which are fertile and healthy and very suitable for colonization by white men. Early in 1861 Livingstone and Kirk tried to reach this lake again direct from the east coast, but, finding this impossible, turned back and went to it round by the Zambezi, as before. And for two months they sailed about on it, surveying and mapping, in a little four-oared gig.

Meanwhile the news of his fresh discoveries had reached England, and both traders and missionaries

began to arrive. Amongst others, his wife came out, but within three months she died of fever. Bishop Mackenzie, the head of the new band of missionaries, died too; Kirk and Livingstone's brother, Charles, broke down and had to return to England. Finally the Government recalled Livingstone himself, so that in 1864 we find him back in London once more. Personally he was warmly received, but there is no disguising the fact that the Government and the public were very lukewarm towards him. The public, of course, was negligible; all it wanted was more tales of cannibals and lions and stories of thrilling adventure, but the Government ought to have had more sense. True, during those six years, other explorers had also been busy in Africa; Speke, Burton and Baker had explored the upper waters of the Nile and discovered the vast lakes—Victoria Nyanza, Lake Tanganyika, and the Albert Nyanza—so that the work of Livingstone himself was perhaps rather overshadowed. But the fact remains that, in discovering Lake Nyassa alone, he had opened up for the Empire what is now the flourishing territory of Nyasaland.

He was now fifty-three years of age, and his friends begged him to stay at home and leave Africa to the younger men. But in a little while, the question of the true sources of the Nile cropped up again, and when the leader of the proposed expedition stood down, the old warrior, Livingstone, was persuaded to take charge of it. It was a much smaller expedition than the previous one, and was somewhat handicapped from the start by lack of funds.

Livingstone arrived in Zanzibar in 1866. At the head of a mixed party of twenty-eight natives and of quite

a menagerie of camels, mules, buffaloes and donkeys, he made his way eastward to Lake Nyassa, skirted this great inland sea, and, working north, a year later reached the southern end of Lake Tanganyika, the northern end of which had already been discovered by Burton and Speke. Seven months later he came to a large river which he followed north and west, believing that it might turn out to be the upper waters of the Nile. As a matter of fact, as the map shows, after passing through three lakes this river, named the Lualaba, flows *west* into the Congo. But for three long years Livingstone explored it, discovering the three lakes and collecting a quantity of information, but being quite unable to make up his mind whether it was really the Nile or the Congo.

Meanwhile his party of twenty-eight natives had dwindled by desertion until only five were left; he was racked with fever and very slack in the matter of discipline, so that his buffaloes and camels died from neglect and ill-usage at the hands of his unruly men. In other words, the old man was beginning to lose his grip. However, at the end of the three years tramping about, he and his remaining "boys" trekked north to a place called Ujiji, at the northern end of Lake Tanganyika, and the headquarters of the Arab slave and ivory traders. Here he hoped to pick up letters and various stores he had ordered by messenger from Zanzibar, and he did manage to get a small part of his stores, the remainder having been stolen on their way across country. With these few goods therefore—cloth, brass wire, beads, and so on, which served as money in Central Africa—he moved off again to the Lualaba River in search of that tantalizing will-o'-the-wisp, the head-waters of the Nile:

This search had become a kind of 'obsession' with him, and ill as he was he set his face towards the north-west and tramped on. His way led through cannibal country; he was involved in a slave-raid in which more than three hundred natives were shot down by the Arabs under his very eyes, and once he was attacked by savages with poisoned arrows. But after two years of it he arrived back safely once more at Ujiji, where, although he loathed the slave-traders and all their works, and laboured passionately to put an end to that cruel traffic, he had, perforce, to accept Arab hospitality in order to keep alive.

He had now been away from England on this last expedition for six years, travelling in unknown country from which he could send no letters home, and the people both in England and in America, hearing nothing from him, had begun to wonder what had happened to him. So, with that flair for publicity which is a feature of some types of business, Gordon Bennett, European Manager of the *New York Herald* newspaper, commissioned one of his reporters, a young fellow named Henry Morton Stanley, to go and find Livingstone. Stanley was really a little Welshman, but had emigrated to the States, changed his nationality, and at the time of his selection was the star war-correspondent on the staff of Gordon Bennett's newspaper. The *New York Herald's* expedition may have been a newspaper "stunt," but at all events we must admit that, whilst people in England were just writing to *The Times* about Livingstone's fate and wagging their beards about it at City dinners, the Americans did set about something practical. They sent Stanley, the American, to find Livingstone,

the Briton, and Stanley found him—found him at the most obvious place at which to look for him, namely where he had his letters sent, at Ujiji, living as the guest of the Arab slave-traders.

All the world knows of that famous meeting, of how they met in the middle of the town, how both men raised their hats—Stanley his white helmet and Livingstone that kind of yachting cap he always wore—and how Stanley said, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume.” Stanley brought all kind of welcome stores and medical supplies for Livingstone, and at the celebration dinner they held on the day of their meeting he even produced, with pride, a bottle of wine, in which both men most cordially toasted each other.

The society of another white man, together with the medicines and the ample food supplies, made such a difference to the old explorer’s health, that, after a few days’ rest, he and Stanley set off together to explore the northern end of Lake Tanganyika. They found that, like Lake Nyassa, it had no connection with the Nile. This once more made Livingstone believe that perhaps, after all, his old acquaintance, the Lualaba River, might be the Nile. So, after spending five months with Stanley, who then went back to Zanzibar and sent him further supplies of stores, Livingstone started off yet again, in 1872, on his lone quest. But he was now fifty-nine years of age—and his health had become thoroughly undermined by privations and fever. The country he traversed was swampy and very hot; sometimes they had to wade through water for days, and, after eight months of it, he became so ill with dysentery that he collapsed, and his men had to carry him in a

kind of rough litter. At last he was too ill to move at all, so his followers made camp. It was evident that he had run his course. His men tended him faithfully, but, on the morning of May 1, 1873, when they entered his little tent, they found him kneeling beside his cot, dead.

So passed David Livingstone, the greatest and the noblest of all African explorers—the man who completely revolutionized the map of the African continent, and whose life and work, by rousing the public conscience, led to a great crusade against the slave-trade.

CHAPTER NINE

NANSEN AND THE NORTH POLE

So much, then, for Asia, for the Americas, Africa, and the lands that lie in the South Seas on the other side of the world, all, as we have seen, discovered by men of various nations urged forward by different motives ranging from mere home-sickness to the passion for accurate scientific knowledge. Now that we come to deal with the Polar regions, a new kind of incentive makes its appearance. Unlike many of the old Navigators, who sailed forth into the Unknown, searching for something of whose existence, even, they were uncertain, the men who have struggled through snow and ice towards the Poles have been attempting to reach a quite definite objective, situated in a certain place. No lure of golden treasure drew them, nor any hope of commercial advantage; true, the spur that drove them forward was, again, the ardent desire to extend scientific knowledge, but linked with this were two new and powerful factors—those of patriotism and personal fame.

For, whereas the names of many explorers are associated with the discovery of, shall we say, America—Columbus, Cabot and Magellan, to take only three—there *can* be the name of only one man, in all the world's history, linked with the achievement of actually reaching each of the Poles; the name of that man who was the *first* to stand upon each of those almost inaccessible spots. For when a Pole is conquered there is no more to be said; the race is run and the name of the conqueror



NANSEN

A Portrait made in 1893 by E. Weissenkiöld

will stand for so long as history endures. And also the name of the nation that gave him birth is enhanced by his fame. That is why the many efforts which have been put forth by the scientists of various countries to reach the central points of the Arctic and Antarctic regions have come to be known as "The Race for the Poles." And it is this rivalry of nations in the search for accurate knowledge and the attainment of national glory that is a rivalry we can applaud.

Both the North and the South Poles have now been conquered—by Peary the American and Amundsen the Norwegian respectively—and the names of both these men are written imperishably on the scroll of fame. But there were hundreds of other men who prepared the way for them, and, although they failed, the stories of their heroic endurance are just as thrilling and sometimes even more exciting than those of the triumphant victors. Overtopping all others, perhaps, are the attempts on the North and South Poles made by two explorers, Nansen the Norwegian and our own Captain Scott. As records of sheer grit and determination, of dogged heroism, the stories of the fight of these men and of their companions against Nature at her cruellest are an inspiration that have helped many a man to square his shoulders and to plunge more bravely into the unending struggle against the trials and difficulties of ordinary daily life.

You must remember that maps—maps in atlases—tend to give the notion that the great continents of the world are spread out flat, as if upon a ribbon, and the only way to get the proper view of things—the right perspective—is to study a globe of the world; one of

those fascinating things you can twiddle round. When you look down on the top of it you see that the northern coasts of America, of Asia and of Europe all form a kind of broken circle around the Arctic Ocean, with the North Pole in the middle of that frozen sea. You will see, too, that if there were not so much ice there, you could jump across from North America to Northern Russia in next to no time. The map that accompanies this chapter shows that fairly clearly.

You may remember that Captain Cook, on his third and last voyage, tried to solve the problem of the North-West Passage by sailing into the Arctic Ocean through Bering Strait. That was in the year 1776. Almost exactly one hundred years later, in 1881, a ship named the *Jeannette*, commanded by an American naval officer, tried to reach the North Pole by sailing through the same Bering Strait, but it got stuck in the ice and, after drifting for two years, sank just north of the New Siberian Islands off the Siberian coast. Three years went by after that event, and then some Eskimos, moving about on the south-west coast of Greenland, came across part of a cap and a pair of oilskin breeches, marked with the name of one of the crew of the *Jeannette*. These things were frozen fast into a piece of drift-ice.

Now Greenland is on exactly the opposite side of the Arctic Ocean to the place where the *Jeannette* had sunk, and the question immediately arose, "How had these things come there?" The only possible conclusion was that they must have drifted, drifted on that piece of ice right across the Arctic Ocean, perhaps across the very Pole itself. And it followed that there must be some kind of current. Well, this set people thinking,

and especially so in the case of Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, a young Norwegian man of science, who had been puzzling for a long time how best to tackle the question of reaching the North Pole. He thought it over very carefully, and finally put forward a scheme. Briefly his argument was this: If relics from the *Jeannette* could drift across the Arctic Ocean frozen into the ice, why could not a ship, with men in it, do the same thing? Of course, it would take a long time; he knew that, because it had taken three years for the pair of breeches to travel the 2,900 miles. That worked out at a speed of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in twenty-four hours. But, allowing for this, Nansen's idea was to build a special kind of ship, to sail to the New Siberian Islands and then to push as far north as possible into the ice, until it closed round him, froze him in and carried him slowly but surely back across the Pole.

But could any ship stand up to the enormous pressure of the packed ice? No ordinary ship could do so, of course, but Nansen reckoned that if its sides were made to slope at a sharp angle, like a wedge, then, when the ice began to squeeze in on all sides, the hull would rise up out of the water and sit on the top of the icefloes. In other words, instead of nipping and crushing the sides in, the ice would automatically press her upwards—like an orange pip squeezed between finger and thumb. This, then, was Nansen's idea, but when he made it public it was greeted with howls of derision by most of the other polar travellers and authorities, members of our own Royal Geographical Society amongst them. Another point the scientists made against Nansen was that he had never done any real polar exploration work,

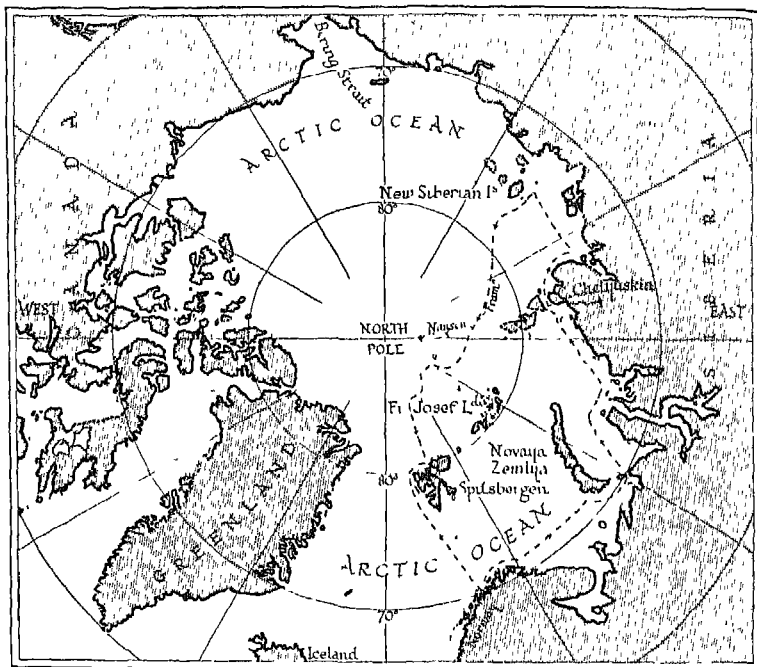
although three years before he had made a journey right across Greenland from east to west. His life had depended upon his getting across, because, unlike all previous explorers, he had left no reserves of food in the rear in case he had to retreat.

However, in spite of all discouragements, Nansen persisted with his scheme, and finally managed to enlist the financial support of his own Government and of several wealthy scientists. He had a strong ship built specially for him with sloping sides more than two feet thick, and he named her the *Fram*, which is Norwegian for "Onwards." He equipped her with every kind of scientific instrument, provisions and coal for five years, a library of books, and a whole lot of games to help pass the time during the long drift across the Pole. On Midsummer Day in 1893—just over forty years ago—the *Fram* set sail with a picked crew of twelve men, every one of them Norwegians. Up the coast of Norway, past Bergen and Tromsø they steamed, until, in a nor'-westerly gale and a blizzard of driving snow, they lost sight of land. The peculiar shape of the ship might save her when she got into the ice—though that remained to be proved—but there was no doubt at all that she was a shockingly bad sea-boat. Nansen was very sea-sick.

On July 25th they reached the islands of Novaya Zemlya. There was a dense sea-fog, but they landed there and took on thirty-four Siberian dogs, for use in case the *Fram* should break up after all, obliging then to take to sledges. These dogs were an awful nuisance—always fighting.

Cape Chelyuskin, the most northerly point of Asia, was reached and passed in September, and Nansen in his wonderful book, *Farthest North*, says:—

"The land was low and desolate. The sun had long since gone down behind the sea, and it was lonely and very still. Only one star was to be seen. It stood straight above Cape Chelyuskin, showing clearly and sadly in the pale sky."¹



So they left the last outpost of the Old World. They turned north then, towards the New Siberian Islands, where the *Jeannette* had foundered nine years before, and soon they began to meet with more and more ice. By the end of September the *Fram* was frozen in, solid. Day by day the sun stood lower in the sky until at last it rose no more, and the long arctic night settled down.

¹ Reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. Constable & Co.

The propeller and the rudder were hauled on deck to prevent their being damaged by the steadily increasing pressure of the ice, and this was a wise precaution, because a fortnight later—well, read what Nansen himself says, and you can imagine what his feelings must have been, when it came to a life-and-death test of those theoretical shipbuilding ideas of his, at which all the other scientists had mocked:

“All at once in the afternoon a deafening noise began, and the whole ship shook. Everyone rushed on deck. On pushed the ice with steady pressure, *but down under us it had to go, and we were slowly lifted up.*”

Three days later it became worse.

“Friday, October 13, 1893. Now,” says Nansen, “now we were in the very midst of what the prophets would have us dread so much. The ice is pressing and packing round us with a noise like thunder. It is piling itself up into heaps high enough to reach a good way up the *Fram's* rigging . . . in fact, it is trying its very utmost to grind the *Fram* into powder. Here we sit quite tranquil, but, outside, the ice is ground against our ship's side, the piles of broken-up floes are forced under her heavy invulnerable keel, and we lie as if in a bed.”

Nansen and his crew then settled down to spend the six-months-long winter night as best they could. They hunted bears and walrus, and Nansen saw to it that there was always something interesting going forward. Christmas came and went, and the New Year of 1894

dawned with the thermometer down to 36 degrees below zero. It was so cold that when a puppy of one of the Siberian dogs happened to lick an iron bolt its tongue immediately froze fast to it, and the bolt had to be warmed before the poor little beggar could be released.

By February the *Fram* had drifted to the 80th degree of latitude. "High festival," Nansen writes. "High festival in honour of the 80th degree. Hurrah! Well sailed! The wind is whistling amongst the ice hummocks, the snow flies rustling through the air, ice and sky are melted into one, but we are going north at full speed—[150 yards an hour!]
—and we are in the wildest of gay spirits. If we go on at this rate we shall be at the Pole in fifty months!"

Nansen had hoped, of course, that the *Fram* would move steadily north all the time, but being frozen fast and at the mercy of the drifting ice, she took a zigzag course; sometimes, in fact, turning her nose almost due south. However, in the month of May the *Fram* crossed the 81st degree of latitude, and five months later the 82nd. When the New Year of 1895 dawned they had been firmly frozen in for a year and three months, and had beaten all previous records, for they had reached latitude 83. A few days later the *Fram* was nearly squashed flat by terrific ice pressure. It was so bad that they actually abandoned ship, but before disaster came it eased off and all was well.

As time went by, Nansen began to realize that, although they were drifting along with the current all right, they were being carried a long way to the east of the North Pole, so he made up his mind to leave the ship and make a dash for it on foot. It was a risky business; in

fact this journey has been called the most daring ever undertaken. He reckoned the distance between the *Fram* and the North Pole as being just short of five hundred miles, and when once he had left his ship he knew that it would be impossible to find it again. And if he did reach the Pole, the nearest land was about a further five hundred miles on the other side of it.

However, he decided to risk it, and in March 1895 Nansen placed the *Fram* in charge of Captain Otto Sverdrup, and, accompanied by a man named Johansen, together with three sledges and twenty-eight dogs, set off on his dash to the Pole. At first they made good progress, but soon the going became very difficult; the ice was very uneven and big cracks appeared. But day after day they struggled on over the broken and uneven ice, sometimes only covering about ten miles in the twenty-four hours, until at last Nansen began to realize that if they tried to go any further they might never come back at all. They were still 260 miles from the North Pole, in latitude 86 degrees, 13.6 minutes North, but as a matter of fact that was much nearer to it than any man had ever reached before. But, with their limited store of provisions, to have continued would have been suicidal, so on April 9th they turned south, making for Franz Josef Land, the nearest point of which was some 450 miles away.

It was a terrible business. The lanes in the ice became worse and worse the further south they went, and sometimes they were unable to find a way round them. When that happened, they had to fasten the two kayaks together—a kayak is a tiny sealskin canoe that you lace yourself into—and, on these, ferry the sledges

and the dogs across the water-lanes. Several times they nearly lost both canoes and sledges. By and by their food supplies began to run low, too, and they had to kill a dog every other day to feed to those that were left. Within three months of leaving the *Fram* only three dogs remained out of the twenty-eight they had started with—and even those were starved and exhausted. The poor brutes were so hungry that they began to eat their leather harness.

Then came a stroke of luck. Nansen shot a seal. He says: "It is a pleasing change to be able to eat as much and as often as we like. Blubber is excellent, both raw and fried. For dinner I fried a highly successful steak, and for supper I made blood pancakes fried in blubber and sugar. And here we lie, up in the Far North, two grim, black, soot-stained barbarians, stirring a mess of soup in a kettle, surrounded on all sides by ice—ice covered with impassable snow." They were held up here a long time by this deep snow and broken ice—they named the place "Longing Camp"—but at the end of a month they were able to push on again, with only two dogs now, and at last, after more than four months of weary travel from the time they left the *Fram*, the two men sighted land at last—looking like a glittering white cloud on the horizon. And this is how Nansen greets it in his wonderful diary:

"Land! Land! After nearly two years we again see something rising above that never-ending white line on the horizon yonder."

It looked quite close, but it took them thirteen days of gruelling hard work to reach it. Once they came to

a wide water-lane in the ice, and Nansen was preparing to cross it in one of the kayaks, when he heard a scuffle behind him, and, turning round, was horrified to see Johansen lying flat on his back with an enormous polar bear standing over him. Nansen's gun was fastened to the canoe, and whilst he was struggling frantically to get at it Johansen gripped the bear's throat and tried to hold it off. But the brute was too strong for him, and was just going to bite his head, when one of the two remaining dogs luckily distracted its attention long enough for Nansen to take aim and shoot it.

At last they came to the edge of the ice. Behind lay all their troubles, and in front of them stretched a clear water-way to Spitsbergen and civilization. Or so they thought. They celebrated the great occasion by eating a piece of chocolate each. Reluctantly they shot their two remaining dogs; it was impossible to take them in the kayaks. Neither could bear to shoot his own dog, so Nansen shot Johansen's and Johansen shot Nansen's. A pitiful business. Then they embarked in their little canoes. They lashed them together and laid the two sledges across them, one in front and the other behind, and so burdened set out to sail and paddle along the shores of the many islands that make up Franz Josef Land. But one night, when they were camped on the beach of one of the islands, a storm arose and blew the drift-ice down upon them until it lay packed and piled in enormous slabs all along the coast. And that put "paid" to their plans. A bitter disappointment it was, for they realized that now there was no hope at all of their reaching home that winter. Making the best of it, however, they built a hut, with walrus hides and tusks and settled

down to spend the long dark winter months, the third polar winter since leaving Norway. Fortunately there were any number of seals, bears, and walruses, so that food and oil were both plentiful. In September, in preparation for the winter, they shot and skinned and cut up walrus until their clothes and everything about them were saturated with blood and blubber-oil, but they managed to get together two great heaps of blubber and meat which they covered over with walrus hide.

In October the sun disappeared and nothing but a weird kind of twilight remained. And for nine months—*nine long months*—these two men lived in a tiny hut amidst the polar ice. Nine months! The author of this book once lived for three months on a lonely island in the Pacific with just one other white man, and that was bad enough. We became so bored with each other's society that we nearly murdered each other before the end of it. But at least we had sunshine and warmth, whereas these two men were in the perishing cold, and living in more or less complete darkness. They had nothing to read; there was nothing to do, nothing to see, no more to talk about. Monotony indescribable. The only variation in their lives was on Tuesdays, when they changed over with the job of cooking. They had no soap, and water had no effect at all on the oil and blubber that soaked their clothes and on the grease that literally encrusted their bodies. To celebrate Christmas Day when it came, Nansen washed himself in a quarter of a cupful of warm water and Johansen turned his shirt.

It was not until May of the next year that they were able to make a move. They set off on the sea-ice along the coast, each man dragging a sledge with the kayaks

perched on top. After many adventures, in one of which Nansen was nearly drowned—the kayaks floated away and he had to plunge in and swim through the icy water to bring them back—when the month of June came they had reached a point off the most southerly island of Franz Josef Land. And then an extraordinary thing happened: one of those dramatic things that sometimes occur in the history of exploration. Perhaps you remember, in the story of Livingstone, that H. M. Stanley, when he found him, exclaimed—"Dr. Livingstone, I presume." Well, a similar thing happened to Nansen. On the morning of June 17, 1896, as he was surveying the lonely line of coast, he suddenly heard a dog bark, and—but I will let Nansen tell it:

"It was with a strange mixture of feelings that I made my way among the numerous hummocks towards land. Suddenly I thought I heard a strange human voice, the first for three years. How my heart beat! . . . Soon I heard another shout, and saw a dark form moving amongst the hummocks. It was a man. We approached each other quickly. I waved my hat; he did the same. I raised my hat; we extended a hand to one another with a hearty, 'How do you do?'

" 'Aren't you Nansen?' he said.

" 'Yes, I am,' was the answer."

And so in this dramatic manner these two men met. The stranger was Frederick Jackson, a British explorer who was in command of an expedition which had been exploring Franz Josef Land for the past two years.

A few weeks later Nansen and Johansen sailed back to Norway in Jackson's ship, the *Windward*, and, strangely enough, almost at the same time, the little *Fram*, having safely emerged from the polar ice after being frozen in for three years all but a month, reached Norway also. Thus it came about that, on September 9, 1896, united once more, Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, together with all his crew, steamed in triumph up Christiania Fjord on their gallant little vessel the *Fram*.

So ended, successfully, the greatest attempt made up to that time to reach the North Pole—and it all happened within the lifetime of many of us living to-day. Indeed, it is only a few years ago that Dr. Nansen died, at the age of sixty-nine.

CHAPTER TEN

SCOTT AND THE SOUTH POLE

ON April 6, 1909, thirteen years after Nansen's magnificent effort, Robert Peary, the American, managed to plant the Stars and Stripes on the North Pole, and therewith that race was won. There remained now only the South Pole, and our own Captain Scott—Captain Robert Falcon Scott—decided to make an attempt, on behalf of Old England, to be the first to reach it. And it may seem a curious thing to say, but it is a fact that he would have succeeded if only Peary had reached the North Pole in the *Autumn* of 1909, instead of in the Spring.

One great difference between the North Pole and the South Pole is this. The North Pole is situated in the middle of a frozen sea, with no land within five hundred miles of it; but the South Pole is on solid land—on the great frozen continent which forms the southern cap of the world. This fundamental fact had been known more or less definitely for nearly a hundred years; ever since Sir James Ross had forced his two ships into the pack-ice and, bursting through into the open sea to the south of it, had discovered a mountainous land covered with ice and snow, and an island with two lofty volcanoes on it, one of them with dense smoke rolling out of its summit. To these two volcanoes he gave the names of his own ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*. He had also found that there was a vast bay in this continent, a bay running far inwards towards the Pole, but filled solid with ice. Not just ordinary thin sheets

of ice, but a great solid mass of it towering 150 feet above the surface of the sea and extending 300 feet below it; in other words, 450 feet thick. Four hundred and fifty feet in thickness, 400 miles wide, and 360 miles from north to south. The scientists say that if the temperature at the South Pole should suddenly change and cause this enormous mass of ice to melt, the water so released would come rolling north and swamp half the world.

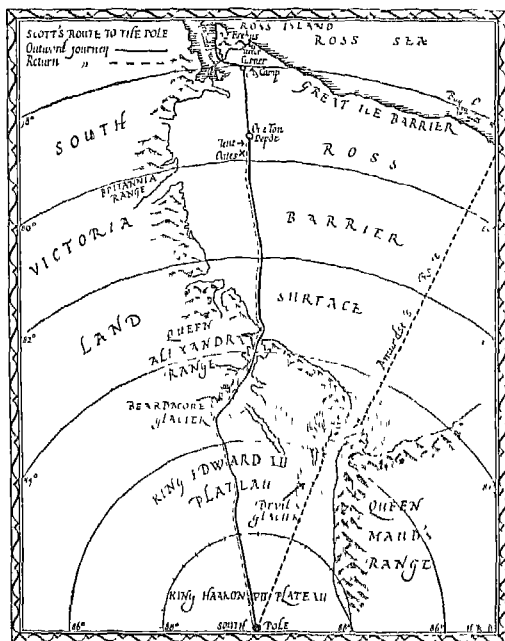
Sir James Ross called it the Great Ice Barrier, but Scott, who went south in 1901 and spent three years exploring it, found that it was not so much a barrier as a great flat plain of ice which filled the bay, and formed a more or less level approach to the mountains behind it, beyond which lay the Pole itself. But looked at another way, it *was* really a barrier, because beyond its towering cliffs no ship could go, and its outer edge was nine hundred miles from the South Pole.

All these things Scott knew, when in 1909 he decided to equip an expedition with the object of planting the Union Jack on the bottom of the world. He had the very greatest difficulty in raising the necessary funds from patriotic subscribers. He stumped the country, lecturing and making speeches in Corn Exchanges and Cotton Exchanges, but at last all was ready and his ship, the *Terra Nova*—a twenty-year-old Dundee whaler—sailed from Cardiff. That was in 1910, just four years before the War started. As Scott was a Royal Navy man himself, nearly all the sailors and engineers he took with him were naval men too, but there was one soldier, Captain Laurence Oates, of the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons. Oates was a man of very few words;

the first time he presented himself for duty to Scott, all he said was: "I'm Oates," and then he just carried on.

The *Terra Nova* sailed to the Cape of Good Hope first, and from there to Australia. It was whilst they were at Melbourne that Scott heard for the first time that there was someone else on the way to the South Pole as well as himself. He was handed a telegram one morning, and this is what it said: "Beg leave to inform you proceeding Antarctic." It was signed with the one word "Amundsen." Now Captain Roald Amundsen was the famous Norwegian polar explorer, and what had happened was this: Amundsen had got together an expedition to discover the North Pole, and was just on the point of starting when news arrived that Peary, the American, had already reached it. So Amundsen, with all his equipment ready, said a few Norwegian swear-words, and promptly sailed towards the South Pole instead of to the North. He knew perfectly well that Scott was after the same thing—hence his telegram. It was really sportsmanlike of him to send it: a kind of warning to Scott that he was right on his tail and that Scott had better hurry up. Also—and this, too, was sporting of him—he made for a point on the Great Ice Barrier more than 350 miles to the east of where Scott intended to land, so that no one could say that he was encroaching on Scott's area. Probably this was not the only reason, since, as a matter of fact, the Bay of Whales, where Amundsen landed, was sixty miles nearer the South Pole than Ross Island, where Scott planned to establish his main camp. It is on Ross Island, lying on the very edge of the Great Ice Barrier, that the two volcanoes are situated, and Scott's ship, after a terribly stormy

voyage south from New Zealand, sighted the smoking cone of Mount Erebus on New Year's Day of 1911. Coils of smoke are always pouring forth from the summit of Mount Erebus; a marvellous thing to see amidst all that lonely waste of snow and ice.



They anchored in McMurdo Sound at the back of the island, and the first thing they did was to erect on shore the big hut they had brought with them in sections. After this they landed the stores. Eight days' hard work saw the finish of this. Then they set about laying down the advance depôts, ready for the time when the dash for the Pole itself should be made. It was decided to make a string of four of these depôts,

with the final and most advanced one approximately on latitude 80 degrees South, about two hundred miles across the Great Ice Barrier on the way towards the Pole. They built these four depôts, but for some reason, when it came to it, the most advanced one of all—which they named One Ton Depôt because there was about a ton of provisions in it—was established some forty miles *this* side of the 80th degree; a falling short of the mark which, as things turned out, had a tragic result.

It is easy enough, of course, to say, quite simply, "they built these four depôts," but the doing of it was terribly hard work. All kinds of difficulties arose; fierce blizzards swept down on them, and the ponies suffered badly from the cold, although they had come from Siberia; in fact three died of it. Then the shore-ice broke up, and that also hindered things a great deal.

One night Scott and three other men were on their way back to base-camp with dog-teams and sledges, when suddenly, without any warning, all the dogs in the middle of Scott's team fell through a snow-bridge over which they were passing and completely disappeared. The sledge itself remained on the surface and so did the solitary leading dog, but all the rest of them—thirteen howling dogs—dropped through and hung, swinging in their traces, over a deep chasm. The leading dog braced himself on the further edge and, although the tremendous strain was half-throttling him, managed somehow to stick it until tent-poles were run across the gap and the weight was lifted off him. Meanwhile the rest of the team hung howling and twisting in the air, and it was a full hour before they could be hauled up to safety. Even then two of them were still down the

hole. They had somehow wriggled out of their harness and fallen on to a shelf about sixty feet below, and there they were, yelping their hearts out. Scott was very fond of animals, and hated to see them suffer. Many polar explorers, by the very nature of things, have had to be pretty ruthless, working their dogs to the bone until they dropped and then knocking them on the head, but Scott never did that; he simply could not bear it. So now, instead of abandoning the two wretched dogs, he actually had himself lowered down, by the dim light of a lantern, on a rope, inch by inch, into the icy gulf, until he stood on the narrow slippery ledge far below. There he undid the rope and waited whilst the dogs were pulled up one after the other, before he himself was finally hauled back again to the surface. Scott was that kind of man.

The laying down of the depôts took them the best part of three months, and by the time they had finished the winter had set in. Being the Antarctic, the seasons were reversed, of course; that is to say, the month of June, instead of being summer-time as it is with us, was the middle of winter. For instance, the 22nd of June was to them Midwinter Day, and they celebrated it with a real Christmas dinner, complete with plum-pudding and a Christmas tree, with candles and crackers and little presents for everyone hung on its branches. They were a happy crowd, in spite of the fact that the long dark winter must pass before they could make a start for the South Pole. Each member of the party was a picked man in his own branch of science, but amongst themselves they were like a bunch of schoolboys. They all had nicknames, of course: Uncle Bill, Sunny Jim,

and so on. Captain Oates, who was in charge of the ponies, had three nicknames: Farmer Hayseed was one of them because of his job, and Titus was another for historical reasons. But mostly they called him just "Soldier." All the ponies and dogs were christened too, with names that seemed to fit them: Snatcher, Jimmy Pig, Nobby, Snippets, Hackenschmidt, and so on.

The sun disappeared, blizzards howled round the huts, and the temperature dropped alarmingly; once it actually touched 77 degrees below zero. But every day was filled with work of one kind or another. At night-time, either someone gave a lecture on his own particular speciality, or Ponting, the photographer, showed lantern-slides of the pictures he had taken. It was weary work waiting, and the only consolation they had was the knowledge that Amundsen to the east of them was equally held up, and would have to wait, like themselves, for the spring.

On August 22nd the blessed sun appeared again above the northern horizon and a spring-time feeling ran through the camp. Even the animals felt it; the ponies went half-crazy, frisking about and kicking their heels up, whilst the dogs wagged their tails like semaphores and barked with excitement. Scott and his men began to take long marches to harden their muscles for the coming journey, and to dig out the advance depôts which the winter snows had buried. And at the end of October all was ready for the start.

Everything was calculated out. The distance to the Pole was 923 miles, and was to be covered in four stages: first from Ross Island to the Base Camp on the Great Ice Barrier, 21 miles; then from the Base Camp,

past the advance depôts, and right across the snow plain of the Great Ice Barrier to the foot of the Beardmore Glacier on the coast-line, 424 miles; then up the Beardmore Glacier, 125 miles; lastly, from the icy summit of this, across the desolate snow-plateau, to the South Pole itself, 353 miles—total, 923.

The start was made on November 1st in three parties. The motor-sledge party, under Lieutenant Evans, went first, then Scott and the pony party, and finally the dog teams. Evans set off, but three days later his two motor-sledges broke down and had to be abandoned; the engines were air-cooled, and got overheated and seized up. The equipment that was on them had to be transferred to smaller sledges and man-hauled. But even so he managed to keep ahead.

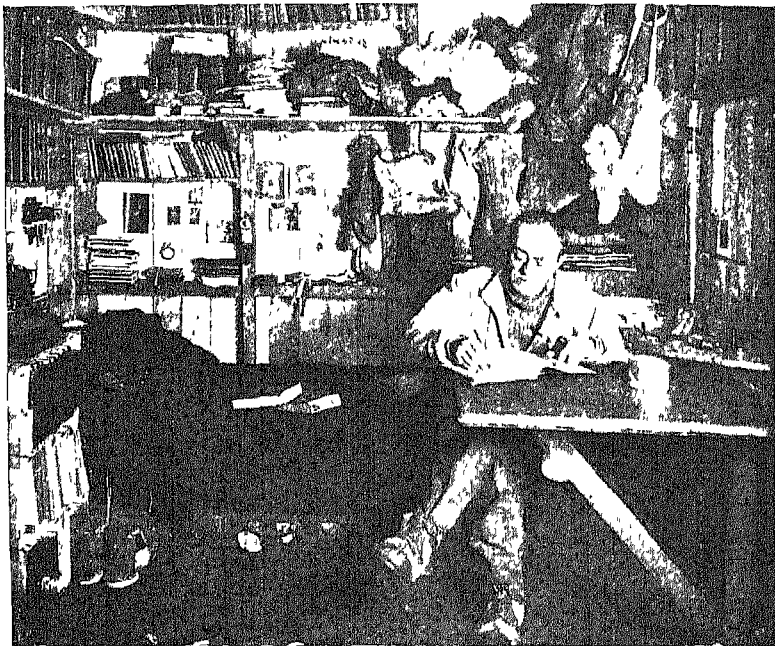
Scott, with eleven men, ten ponies and the dog-teams, reached One Ton Depôt after a fortnight's trekking, and a few days later caught up with the ex-motor-sledge party, and then, all together, they pushed forward. But the weather was exceptionally bad—high gales and stinging snow-squalls. And the surface was rough, too. On most days they managed to cover about fifteen miles, but it was a terrible business for the ponies. One had to be shot on November 24th, another on the 28th, and a third on December 2nd, their bodies being used for food both for the men and the dogs. Then, on December 5th, when they were nearly at the foot of the Beardmore Glacier on the mainland, a terrible blizzard swept down on them, and held them prisoners for four whole days. They could do nothing but wait. Evans tells us in his book that he read Dickens' *Little Dorrit* right through. As a result of the delay the forage

gave out and they had to shoot all the remaining ponies. They called that place Shamibles Camp. Then came the climb up the Glacier, a heartbreaking job through slushy snow and deep drifts; but on December 21st they reached the plateau at the top, and 337 miles of dry sand-like snow was now all that lay between them and the South Pole.

They celebrated Christmas Day with a four-course banquet, horse-meat flavoured with onion and curry powder, then a kind of porridge made of arrowroot and cocoa and biscuits, followed by a plum-pudding, dessert, and quantities of hot cocoa. Scott says in his diary that it was a real "tightener" of a meal; they could hardly move after it. Next day they were off again, and for a fortnight they pushed ahead steadily, averaging close on sixteen miles a day. New Year's Day, 1912, found them only 173 miles from the Pole, and by January 4th this had been reduced to 145 miles. It was on this day that Scott made the final selection of men to go forward with him on the last lap. There were five of them: Scott himself, Petty Officer Evans, Lieutenant Bowers, Dr. Wilson and Captain Oates. The rest of the party turned back with heavy hearts—only 145 miles from the Pole—and waved farewell as the distance between the two groups widened until the one moving steadily southwards dwindled to a speck in that desolate waste of snow.

Scott and his four companions plugged on day after day: trudge, trudge, trudge, across the lonely levels, with nothing but the thud of their fur-clad feet on the snow to break the terrible silence. Eighty-five miles to go; seventy-four miles, sixty miles, and still they marched

on. On the 15th they laid down their last depot, and carrying provisions for only nine days pushed forward eagerly on the last lap. Scott says: "It is wonderful to think that two long marches would land us at the Pole. We left our dépôt to-day with nine days' provisions, so



CAPTAIN SCOTT WRITING HIS JOURNAL IN THE WINTER QUARTERS HUT
Reproduced from H. G. Ponting. "The Great White South" (Duckworth)

that it ought to be a certain thing now, and the only appalling possibility is the sight of the Norwegian flag forestalling ours. Only twenty-seven miles from the Pole. We *ought* to do it now."

At twelve o'clock noon on the 16th there were only twenty miles left to go, and that afternoon they hurried

on as fast as they could. And then the blow fell Bowers caught sight of it first: a black speck on the snow ahead of them. They drew nearer and nearer to it, until at last there was no room for doubt. It was a flag; a black mark-flag tied to a piece of wood. And round about it were the tracks of dogs and men, and sledge-trails coming and going. Amundsen had beaten them to it! "This told us the whole story," says Scott in his diary, "the Norwegians have forestalled us and are first at the Pole. It is a terrible disappointment." And then he says, with the unselfishness that was typical of him: "I am very sorry for my loyal companions. All the day-dreams must go. To-morrow we must march to the Pole and then hasten home with all the speed we can compass; it will be a wearisome return."

The next day Scott and his four companions reached the South Pole, to find a tent close beside it, flying the Norwegian flag, and containing, besides some discarded clothing, a letter addressed to Haakon, King of Norway, with a note from Amundsen asking Scott to post it for him. Scott's observations fixed the actual position of the Pole about half a mile away from Amundsen's mark, so they built a cairn on the spot and planted the British flag on it, "our poor slighted Union Jack," as Scott calls it. "Great God," he says, "this is an awful place, and terrible enough for us to have laboured to it without the reward of being first."

Then they faced about for home, "eight hundred miles of solid dragging," says Scott, "and good-bye to most of our day-dreams." The journey back began on January 19th. A succession of blizzards crippled the pace, but they slogged on. Petty Officer Evans fell and

hurt his head badly; Dr. Wilson became snow-blind; and Captain Oates suffered terribly from frost-bitten feet. Scott himself fell and bruised a shoulder. But they struggled on, just managing each time to reach the next depôt before the food they were carrying gave out. By February 8th they had crossed the plateau and were back at the top of the Beardmore Glacier, and by the 24th were down on the Great Ice Barrier, eating the pony-meat which had been left at Shambles Camp. But on the way down poor Evans, who, in spite of his head injury—it was concussion—had struggled on doggedly, pulling his weight, fainted one morning and died the same night.

Two stages of the journey were now past—the Plateau and the Glacier—but the last and longest, the 424 mile trek across the flat plain of the Great Ice Barrier, still lay before them. They trudged on, but by March 6th Oates' feet were so badly frost-bitten that he could hardly hobble, and the business of getting his boots on delayed them for hours every day. But they crept forward together, the sick man and the three others, for ten mortal days. Food was running very low, and, owing to Oates' painful crawl—every step he took was sheer agony—they only made six or seven miles a day. At this rate they would all starve before reaching One Ton Depôt, and no one realized this better than Oates. So he begged the others to leave him behind, but they persuaded him to struggle on a little farther. He staggered forward a few more miles, and when he crawled into his sleeping-bag that night, prayed that he might not wake again. But when morning came he was still alive, and, waking, he arose, and did that thing which will

never be forgotten. A blizzard was raging outside the tent. Oates pulled himself upright till he stood upon his poor frozen feet, and, uttering the words, "I am just going outside, and—and I may be some time," he lifted the flap of the tent and crept forth to his death in the whirling snow.

The three remaining men, Scott, Wilson and little Bowers, pushed forward faster now, but their strength was far spent, and next day Scott's right foot went—all his toes became hopelessly frost-bitten. But, gritting his teeth, he dragged on. There was a fiendish head wind and the temperature was 40 degrees below zero. Half-starved, and more than half-frozen, they bowed their heads and plugged steadily forwards into the teeth of it, and on the 19th, with hands stiff with cold, made camp. Only eleven miles—*eleven miles*—now separated them from One Ton Camp with its piles of food and fuel. Had it been planted on the spot originally chosen for it, they would already have reached it. Even so, they might have fought through; they *would* have done, however slow and staggering their progress. But that night a blizzard came, a bellowing, tearing blizzard that turned the world outside into a whistling hurricane of death. Nothing living could stand against it. They had with them reduced rations sufficient for two days, with care. The blizzard lasted in full fury for eleven days. They lived for ten days—or Scott did, for the last entry in his diary is dated March 29th.

He says: "Every day we have been ready to start for our depôt eleven miles away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall

stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, and the end cannot be far. It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more." And at the foot of this he signed his name—"Robert Falcon Scott." So died a great and gallant English gentleman.

ENVOI

So, too, ends my series of ten tales of Exploration and Adventure. I have, of course, only been able to touch upon the very fringe of them in order to compress them into such short compass. I have had to leave out so very much. But I should like to think that your interest has been aroused. If it has, then go exploring yourselves with these Pioneers; read their books—books, mark you, not written in the comfort of a cosy room when the end of the adventure was known, but day-by-day diaries scrawled painfully amidst the steaming jungles or in the frozen lands of the north, with death grinning just around the corner. All these are awaiting your pleasure; rows and rows of them in the Public Libraries. They make fiction seem silly.

Adventure forth then with the old Navigators, and with them ride the unknown seas into the eye of the setting sun.

Westward ho! my hearties!

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

900

Eric the Red discovers Greenland 982
Bjarni the first Viking to sight North
American coast (about 986)

The Vikings settle on
Greenland coast

1000

Leif Ericson lands in Vineland (mod-
ern New England) about 1002

1100

Crusades, beginning in
1097, widen European
knowledge of the East and
give rise to a great advance
in exploration. Knowledge
is gained from the Arabs,
trade increases, and medie-
val sailing maps are im-
proved

1200

The first European traveller (John
de Plano Carpini) starts for the Far
East 1245, and reaches Karakorum
1246

Matteo and Niccolo Polo leave Con-
stantinople 1260 and journey to China
Marco and the two elder Polos leave
Venice 1271 and journey through
Persia, penetrate to India, cross the
Gobi Desert, and reach China

Marco Polo penetrates to Northern
Burma and Cochun-China during his
seventeen years' travel in China

The Polos return by sea through China
Sea, Straits of Malacca, Indian Ocean,
along West Coast of India to the
mouth of the Persian Gulf, thence
overland, and reach Venice 1295

Increasing intercourse with
the Far East. A steady
stream of travellers and
merchants take the land
route

The Western Atlantic first
explored by Italians from
about 1270 to 1340,
thereafter other European
nations follow

1300

Ibn Battuta (1304-1378), the great Muslim traveller, explores Arabia and Persia, journeys to Equator along E. African coast, to N. Russia, Central Asia and India, E. Indian Archipelago and China, to Timbuktú, lands of the Niger and Western Sahara

The magnet (probably discovered at end of twelfth century) leads to perfection of compass at beginning fourteenth century. Compass in general use amongst Mediterranean navigators by fifteenth century

1400

Diaz discovers and rounds the Cape of Good Hope 1487

Columbus' four journeys to West Indies and Jamaica 1492-1502

John Cabot explores the coast of North America and Newfoundland 1497-8

Vasco da Gama reaches India via the Cape of Good Hope 1498

Amerigo Vespucci (from whom America derives its name) explores the New World (1498-1502)

Prince Henry the Navigator (of Portugal) encourages study of geography and equips expeditions along West Coast of Africa. Portuguese rediscover Madeira group 1418-20, Cape Bojador rounded 1435; Cape Verde rounded 1445, Cape Verde Islands discovered 1456; exploration carried still further south, culminating in Diaz' journey

The Pope's Line (about longitude 47 degrees W.) grants all land east of it to the Portuguese, and west of it to the Spanish, 1494

1500

Pinzon discovers mouth of the Amazon 1500

Balboa crosses Isthmus of Panama, and is the first European to see the Pacific Ocean 1513

Ponce de Leon discovers Florida 1513

De Soto discovers estuary of Plate River 1515

Spanish found city of Panama 1519

Magellan's expedition sails round the world 1519-22

Cortés conquers Mexico 1521

Portuguese discover New Guinea

Spanish, realizing America to be a barrier to the East, search for entrance to the Pacific, which is found by Magellan

Spanish conquer Central America from Mexico to Panama 1521-24. They explore the south of N. America and California

Pizarro conquers Peru 1533

Cartier explores St Lawrence basin,
looking for passage to Far East 1535

Portuguese adventurers discover Japan
1542 (known to Marco Polo as
Chipangu)

Ferdinand Pinto lands in Japan 1546

Frobisher searches for a North-West
passage 1576

Drake sails round the world 1577-80

Barents (Dutch), searching for N E
passage, discovers Spitsbergen

The search for the fabled
El Dorado opens up a great
area of S America

English, French and Dutch
follow Spanish and Portu-
guese in the New World
English and Dutch attempt
to find North-East and
North-West passages to the
Indies

Spanish exploration in
Pacific (first Spanish
colony in Philippine Islands
1565)

Queen Elizabeth grants a
charter to East India Com-
pany 1599

1600

Willem Janszoon (Dutch) re-discovers
New Guinea 1605, then Australia
(which he describes as an extension
of New Guinea)

Champlain discovers Lake Champlain
1609

Hudson, searching for N.W. passage,
enters Hudson Bay 1610

Pilgrim Fathers found colony of New
Plymouth 1620

Tasman, searching for Chile, sights
New Zealand (names it Staaten Land),
discovers Tasmania 1642, and sails
round Australia

Foundation of Dutch East
India Company 1602 Rise
of Dutch and decline of
Spanish power in Pacific

Growth of English sea
power. Colonization in
North America

Extensive exploration of
North America by French
and English

1700

Bering sails through his strait 1728,
and explores much of N. Pacific
Cook re-discovers New Zealand 1769,
and proves it an island

Cook re-discovers Sandwich Islands
1777

Cook charts much of the
Pacific, greatly extending
knowledge of it. He explores
within the Antarctic circle

Alexander Mackenzie the first Euro-
pean to cross North America at its
greatest width 1792-3

Mungo Park explores River Niger 1795

Humboldt explores S. America 1799-
1803

1800

Bellingshausen (Russian) sails round
Antarctic continent 1819-21

Ross discovers Victoria Land in
Antarctic 1840

Franklin discovers the North-West
passage 1847

Livingstone crosses Africa from West
to East 1849-56

Burton and Speke discover Lake
Victoria Nyanza 1858

Stanley discovers Mount Ruwenzori
1885 and solves problem of Nile
sources

Nansen crosses Greenland 1888, makes
Farthest North Journey 1893-96

Livingstone spends thirty
years in missionary work
and exploration in Africa
Africa extensively explored
by Burton, Speke, Stanley
and others

The second half of this
century witnesses a great
deal of scientific explora-
tion in all parts of Asia and
Africa

1900

Younghusband crosses Tibetan fron-
tier and reaches Lhasa 1904

Shackleton reaches Farthest South 1908

Peary reaches North Pole 1909

Amundsen reaches South Pole 1911,
Scott 1912

Bertram Thomas crosses Rub'al Khali
from South to North 1928-31, St.

John Philby from East to West 1932

The compiler has endeavoured to make this table reasonably accurate: this has not been easy when authorities have disagreed. It is hoped that the generalizations in the right-hand column are as accurate as is possible within the limits imposed. The information has been drawn mainly from the books of Sir Raymond Beazley, Mr. E. Heawood, Mr. T. N. L. Baker, Sir Percy Sykes and the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

