Title: Terre Napoleon
A history of French explorations and projects in Australia

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Release Date: February, 2005 [EBook #7450]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on May 2, 2003]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

Produced by Sue Asscher and Col Choat

TERRE NAPOLEON.

A HISTORY OF FRENCH EXPLORATIONS

AND PROJECTS IN AUSTRALIA

BY

ERNEST SCOTT.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS.

SECOND EDITION.

METHUEN & CO., LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON.

FIRST PUBLISHED JULY 7TH, 1910.
SECOND EDITION 1911.

PREFACE.

The main object of this book is to exhibit the facts relative to the expedition despatched to Australia by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1800 to 1804, and to consider certain opinions which have been for many years current regarding its purpose.

Until about five years ago the writer accepted without doubt the conclusions presented by leading authorities. One has to do that in regard to the vast mass of historical material, because, obviously, however much disposed one may be to form one’s opinions on tested facts apart from the writings of historians, several lifetimes would not be sufficient for a man to inquire for himself as to the truth of a bare fraction of the conclusions with which research is concerned.

But it so happened that the writer was interested, for other reasons than those disclosed in the following pages, in ascertaining exactly what was done by the expedition commanded by Captain Nicolas Baudin on the coasts which were labelled Terre Napoleon. On scrutinising the facts somewhat narrowly, he was surprised to find that opinions accepted with unquestioning faith began to crumble away for lack of evidence to support them.

So much is stated by way of showing that the book has not been written to prove a conclusion formulated a priori, but with a sincere desire that the truth about the matter should be known. We read much in modern books devoted to the era of the Corsican about "the Napoleonic legend." There seems to be, just here, a little sporadic Napoleonic legend, to which vitality has been given from quarters whence have come some heavy blows at the larger one.

The plan adopted has been, after a preliminary sketch of the colonial

situation of Great Britain and France in the period under review, to bring upon the scene--the Terre Napoleon coasts--the discovery ship Investigator, despatched by the British Government at about the same time as Napoleon's vessels were engaged upon their task, and to describe the meeting of the two captains, Flinders and Baudin, in Encounter Bay. Next, the coasts denominated Terre Napoleon are traversed, and an estimate is made of the original work done by Baudin, and of the serious omissions for which he was to blame. A second part of the subject is then entered upon. The origin of the expedition is traced, and the ships are carefully followed throughout their voyage, with a view to elicit whether there was, as alleged, a political purpose apart from the scientific work for which the enterprise was undertaken at the instance of the Institute of France.

The two main points which the book handles are: (1) whether Napoleon's object was to acquire territory in Australia and to found "a second fatherland" for the French there; and (2) whether it is true, as so often asserted, that the French plagiarised Flinders' charts for the purpose of constructing their own. On both these points conclusions are reached which are at variance with those commonly presented; but the evidence is placed before the reader with sufficient amplitude to enable him to arrive at a fair opinion on the facts, which, the author believes, are faithfully stated.

A third point of some importance, and which is believed to be quite new, relates to the representation of Port Phillip on the Terre Napoleon maps. It is a curious fact that, much as has been written on the early history of Australia, no writer, so far as the author is aware, has observed the marked conflict of evidence between Captain Baudin and his own officers as to that port having been seen by their discovery ships, and as to how the representation of it on the French maps got there. Inasmuch as Port Phillip is the most important harbour in the territory which was called Terre Napoleon, the matter is peculiarly interesting. Yet, although the author has consulted more than a score of volumes in which the expedition is mentioned, or its work dealt with at some length, not one of the writers has pointed out this sharp contradiction in testimony, still less attempted to account for it. It is to be feared that in the writing of Australian, as of much other history, there has been on the part of authors a considerable amount of "taking in each other's washing."

The table of comparative chronology is designed to enable the reader to see at a glance the dates of the occurrences described in the book, side by side with those of important events in the world at large. It is always an advantage, when studying a particular piece of history, to have in mind other happenings of real consequence pertaining to the period under review. Such a table should remind us of what Freeman spoke of as the "unity and indivisibility of history," if it does no more.

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1606. First charter to the Virginia Company.

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1643. Death of Louis XIII.

1644. Tasman’s second voyage; exploration of northern Australia.

1649. Execution of Charles I.

1652. Birth of William Dampier.

1655. English conquest of Jamaica.

1658. Death of Oliver Cromwell.

1659. Death of Tasman.

1682. Penn founds Pennsylvania.

1683. The French found Louisiana.

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1688. Fall of the Stuart dynasty; accession of William of Orange.

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1714. Death of Queen Anne.

1728. Birth of James Cook.

1756. Birth of Nicolas Baudin. De Brosses publishes his Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes.

1759. Wolfe captures Quebec.

1765. Watt’s invention of the steam-engine.

1766. Bougainville’s voyage to the South Seas.

1768 to 1770. Cook’s voyage in the Endeavour; discovery of Botany Bay, Port Jackson, and eastern Australia.

1769. Charles Decaen born.

1769. Birth of Napoleon Bonaparte.

1771. Marion-Dufresne’s voyage to Tasmania and New Zealand.

1773. Boston tea riots.

1774. Matthew Flinders born.

1774. Meeting of first American Congress.

1775. Francois Peron born.

1776. Declaration of Independence.

1778 to 1779. Cook's third voyage and death.

1778. Death of Chatham.

1785 to 1788. Voyage of La Perouse; call at Port Jackson.

1788. Founding of New South Wales.

1789. Mutiny of the Bounty.

1789. Washington elected first President of United States.
Fall of the Bastille.

1790. Flinders joins the Navy.

1790. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution.

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1791. Passing of the Canada Act.

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Establishment of the Institute of France.

1797. Battle of Cape St. Vincent.
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1798. Discovery of Bass Strait and of Westernport by George Bass.
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1798. Battle of the Nile.
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1799. Bonaparte becomes First Consul of the French Republic.

1800. (May) Bonaparte authorises the despatch of Baudin's expedition.
(October) The expedition sails.
(December) Grant reaches Port Jackson in the Lady Nelson.

1800. Battle of Marengo.

1801. (May) Baudin's ships reach Australia.
(July) Flinders sails from England in the Investigator.
(August) Le Geographe reaches Timor.
(November) Baudin's ships sail from Timor to Tasmania.
(December) The Investigator reaches Australia.

1801. Battle of Copenhagen.

1802. (January) Murray discovers Port Phillip.
(February) Flinders discovers Spencer's Gulf; Murray enters Port Phillip.
(March) French ships separated by storm.
(April) Meeting of Flinders and Baudin in Encounter Bay; Flinders enters Port Phillip.
(May) Investigator reaches Port Jackson.
(June) Baudin reaches Port Jackson.
(July) Flinders sails for Gulf of Carpentaria.
(November) French ships leave Sydney.
(December) Le Naturaliste sails for Europe; the Cumberland at King Island; Robbins erects the British flag; Le Geographe and Casuarina sail for Kangaroo Island.

1802. Peace of Amiens.

1803. (January) Freycinet in Spencer's and St. Vincent's Gulfs.
(June) Le Geographe again at Timor; Le Naturaliste enters Havre; Investigator returns to Port Jackson.
(July) Baudin abandons exploration and sails for Mauritius.
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(September) Death of Baudin.
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1803. Sale of Louisiana by France to United States.
Renewal of the great war.

1804. Le Geographe arrives at Lorient.
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1804. Napoleon becomes Emperor.

1805. Battle of Trafalgar.

1806. Napoleon signs order for release of Flinders.

1806. Death of William Pitt.

1807. Publication of first volume of Voyage de Decouvertes aux Terres Australes, with first atlas.

1810. (July) Liberation of Flinders.
(October) Mauritius blockaded by the British.
(December) Capitulation of Mauritius; death of Peron.

1810. Napoleon marries Marie Louise.

1811. Second part of French atlas published.

1812. Publication of Freycinet atlas of charts.

1812. The retreat from Moscow.
British Naval War with U.S.A.

1814. Publication of Flinders' Voyage to Terra Australis; death of Flinders (July).

1814. Abdication of Napoleon.

1815. Publication of volume 3 of Voyage de Decouvertes.

1815. Battle of Waterloo.

1816. Publication of volume 2 of Voyage de Decouvertes, with revised map of Australia.

1821. Death of Napoleon.

1826. Westernport Settlement projected and abandoned.

1829. Foundation of Western Australia.

1832. Death of Decaen.

1832. English Reform Bill.

1835. Batman finds site of Melbourne.

1836. Foundation of South Australia.

1837. City of Melbourne founded.

1837. Accession of Queen Victoria.

1851. Colony of Victoria established.

1851. Louis Napoleon's coup d'etat.

1853. French annexation of New Caledonia.

1854. Crimean War.

1859. Colony of Queensland established.

1860. Lincoln, President of the United States.

TERRE NAPOLEON.

INTRODUCTION.

PART 1.

A continent with a record of unruffled peace.
Causes of this variation from the usual course of history.
English and French colonisation during the Napoleonic wars.
The height of the Napoleonic empire and the entire loss of the French colonies.
The British colonial situation during the same period.
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Its defencelessness.
The French squadron in the Indian Ocean.
Rear-Admiral Linois.
The audacious exploit of Commodore Dance, and Napoleon’s direction to "take Port Jackson" in 1810.

Australia is the only considerable portion of the world which has enjoyed the blessed record of unruffled peace. On every other continent, in nearly every other island large in area, "war’s red ruin writ in flame" has wrought its havoc, leaving evidences in many a twinging cicatrice. Invasion, rebellion, and civil war constitute enormous elements in the chronicles of nations; and Shelley wrote that the study of history, though too important to be neglected, was "hateful and disgusting to my very soul," because he found in it little more than a "record of crimes and miseries." A map of the globe, coloured crimson as to those countries where blood has flowed in armed conflicts between men, would present a circling splash of red; but the vast island which is balanced on the Tropic of Capricorn, and spreads her bulk from the tenth parallel of south latitude to "the roaring forties," would show up white in the spacious diagram of carnage. No foreign foe has menaced her thrifty progress since the British planted themselves at Port Jackson in 1788; nor have any internal broils of serious importance interrupted her prosperous career.

This striking variation from the common fate of peoples is attributable to three causes. First, the development of a British civilisation in Australia has synchronised with the attainment and unimpaired maintenance of dominant sea-power by the parent nation. The supremacy of Great Britain upon the blue water enabled her colonies to grow to strength and wealth under the protection of a mighty arm. Secondly, during the same period a great change in British colonial policy was inaugurated. Statesmen were slow to learn the lessons taught in so trenchant a fashion by the revolt of the American colonies; but more liberal views gradually ripened, and Lord Durham’s Report on the State of Canada, issued in 1839, occasioned a beneficent new era of self-government. The states of Australia were soon left with no grievance which it was not within their own power to remedy if they chose, and virtually as they chose. Thirdly, these very powers of self-government developed in the people a signal capacity for governing and being governed. The constitutional machinery submitted the Executive to popular control, and made it quickly sensitive to the public will. Authority and subjects were in sympathy, because the subjects created the authority. Further, there was no warlike native race in Australia, as there was in New Zealand and in South Africa, to necessitate armed conflict. Thus security from attack, chartered

autonomy, and governing capacity, with the absence of organised pugnacious tribes, have combined to achieve the unique result of a continent preserved from aggression, disruption, or bloody strife for over one hundred and twenty years.

There was a brief period, as will presently be related, when this happy state of things was in some danger of being disturbed. It certainly would have been impossible had not Great Britain emerged victorious from her protracted struggle, first against revolutionary France, and later against Napoleon, in the latter years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.

In those wars colonial possessions "became pawns in the game."* (* The phrase is Professor Egerton's, Cambridge Modern History 9 735.) There was no Imperialism then, with its strident note, its ebullient fervour and flag waving. There was no national sense of pride in colonial Empire, or general appreciation of the great potentialities of oversea possessions. "The final outcome of the great war was the colonial ascendancy of Great Britain, but such was not the conscious aim of those who carried through the struggle."* (* Ibid page 736.) Diplomacy signed away with a dash of the quill possessions which British arms had won after tough fights, anxious blockades, and long cruises full of tension and peril. Even when the end of the war saw the great Conqueror conquered and consigned to his foam-fenced prison in the South Atlantic, Great Britain gave back many of the fruits which it had cost her much, in the lives of her brave and the sufferings of her poor, to win; and Castlereagh defended this policy in the House of Commons on the curious ground that it was expedient "freely to open to France the means of peaceful occupation, and that it was not the interest of this country to make her a military and conquering, instead of a commercial and pacific nation."* (* Parliamentary Debates 28 462.)

PART 2.

The events with which this book is mainly concerned occurred within the four years 1800 to 1804, during which Europe saw Bonaparte leap from the position of First Consul of the French Republic to the Imperial throne. After great French victories at Marengo, Hochstadt, and Hohenlinden (1800), and a brilliant naval triumph for the British at Copenhagen (1801), came the fragile Peace of Amiens (1802)--an "experimental peace," as Cornwallis neatly described it. Fourteen months later (May 1803) war broke out again; and this time there was almost incessant fighting on a titanic scale, by land and sea, until the great Corsican was humbled and broken at Waterloo.

The reader will be aided in forming an opinion upon the events discussed hereafter, by a glance at the colonial situation during the period in question. The extent of the dependencies of France and England in 1800 and the later years will be gathered from the following summary.

In America France regained Louisiana, covering the mouth of the Mississippi. It had been in Spanish hands since 1763; but Talleyrand, Bonaparte's foreign minister, put pressure upon Spain, and Louisiana

became French once more under the secret treaty of San Ildefonso (October 1800). The news of the retrocession, however, aroused intense feeling in the United States, inasmuch as the establishment of a strong foreign power at the mouth of the principal water-way in the country jeopardised the whole trade of the Mississippi valley. President Jefferson, recognising that the perpetuation of the new situation "would have put us at war with France immediately," sent James Monroe to Paris to negotiate. As Bonaparte plainly saw at the beginning of 1803 that another war with Great Britain was inevitable, he did not wish to embroil himself with the Americans also, and agreed to sell the possession to the Republic for eighty million francs. Indeed, he completed arrangements for the sale even before Monroe arrived.

Some efforts had also been made, at Bonaparte's instance, to induce Spain to give up the Floridas, East and West, but European complications prevented the exertion of pressure in this direction; and the whole of Florida became part of the United States by treaty signed in 1819. The sale of Louisiana lowered the French flag on the only remaining portion of American territory that acknowledged the tricolour, except the pestilential fragment of French Guiana, on the north-east of South America, where France has had a footing since the beginning of the seventeenth century, save for a short interval (1809 to 1815) when it was taken by the British and Portuguese. But the possession has never been a profitable one, and a contemporary writer, quoting an official publication, describes it as enjoying "neither agriculture, commerce, nor industry."* (* Fallot, L'Avenir Colonial de la France (1903) page 237.)

In the West Indies, France had lost Martinique and Guadeloupe during the naval wars prior to Bonaparte's ascension to supreme authority. These islands were restored to her under the Treaty of Amiens; were once more captured by the British in 1809 to 1810; and were finally handed back to France under the Treaty of Paris in 1814. Tobago and St. Lucia, taken from France in 1803, were not restored.

The large island of San Domingo (the present republic of Haiti, the Espanola of Columbus, and the first seat of European colonisation in the west) had been occupied by French, Spanish, and British planters prior to 1796. The French had been there officially since Richelieu recognised and protected the settlements made by filibusters early in the seventeenth century. The decree of the revolutionary Assembly freeing the slaves in all French possessions led to widespread insurrections. There were scenes of frightful outrage; and above the storm of blood and horror rose to fame the huge figure of the black hero, Toussaint L'Ouverture. At the head of a negro army he at first assisted the French to overturn Spanish rule; but having attained great personal power, and being a man of astonishing capacity for controlling the people of his own race, and for mastering military and governmental problems, he determined to use the opportunity to found an autonomous state under the suzerainty of France. By January 1801 Toussaint L'Ouverture was in possession of the capital. But Bonaparte would not tolerate the domination of the black conqueror, and despatched an expedition to San Domingo to overthrow his government and establish French paramountcy. The result was disastrous. It is true that Toussaint was captured and exiled to France, where he died miserably

in prison at Besancon in 1803; but the white troops under General Leclerc perished of yellow fever in hundreds; the blacks retired to the mountains and harassed the suffering French; whilst the vigilance of British frigates, and the requirements of European policy, obviated all possibility of effective reinforcements being sent. Gallic authority in San Domingo ended ingloriously, for the negroes in 1803 drove the debilitated chivalry of France in defeat and disaster to the sea, and chose to be their ruler one who, like themselves, had commenced life as a slave. Napoleon said at St. Helena that his attempt to subjugate San Domingo was the greatest folly of his life.

In the Indian Ocean the French possessed the Isle of France (now, as a British colony, called Mauritius) and Reunion. They had not yet established themselves in Madagascar, though there was some trade between the Mascareignes and the colonists of the Isle of France. Bonaparte during the Consulate contemplated making definite attempts to colonise Madagascar, and, early in 1801, called for a report from his first colonial minister, Forfait. When he obtained the document, he sent it back asking for more details, an indication that his interest in the subject was more than one of transient curiosity. Forfait suggested the project of establishing at Madagascar a penal colony such as the British had at Port Jackson;* (* Prentout, L'Ile de France sous Decaen, 302.) but subsequent events did not favour French colonial expansion, and nothing was done.

The British captured Pondicherry and the other French settlements in India in 1793, but agreed to restore them under the Treaty of Amiens. For reasons which will be indicated later, however, the territories were not evacuated by British troops, who continued to hold them till the post-bellum readjustment of 1815 was negotiated.

A similar record applies to Senegal, in West Africa. It had been French since the era of Richelieu, with intervals of capture, restoration, and recapture. The British ousted their rivals once more in 1804, and gave back the conquest in 1815.

A careful examination of these details reveals a remarkable fact. Although the year 1810 saw the Napoleonic empire at the crest of its greatness in Europe; although by that time the Emperor was the mightiest personal factor in world politics; although in that year he married a daughter of the Caesars, and thought he had laid plans for the foundation of a dynasty that should perpetuate the Napoleonic name in association with Napoleonic power--yet, in that very year, France had been stripped of the last inch of her colonial possessions. The nation in whose glorious Pantheon were emblazoned the great names of Montcalm and Dupleix, of Jacques Cartier and La Salle, of Champlain and La Bourdonnais, and whose inveterate capacity for colonisation of even the most difficult kind can never be doubted by any candid student of her achievements in this field, both before and since the disastrous Napoleonic age, was now naked of even so much as a barren rock in a distant sea upon which to plant her flag.

Such is the picture of the French colonial system as it presents itself

during the period within which occurred the events described in this book. These facts give poignancy to the reflection of the distinguished philosophical historian who has written of his country: "A melancholy consequence of her policy of interference in neighbouring states, and of occupying herself with continental conquests, has always been the loss of her naval power and of her colonies. She could only establish oversea possessions on a durable foundation on the condition of renouncing the policy of invasion that she practised in Europe during the centuries. Every continental victory was balanced by the ruin of our naval power and of our distant possessions, that is to say, the decrease of our real influence in the world."* (* Leroy-Beaulieu, Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes, 1902 edition, 1 220.)

PART 3.

It would be simple to sum up the colonial situation of Great Britain in the period under review, by saying that she gained just in the measure that France lost. But such a crude formula would not convey a sufficient sense of her actual achievements. The end of the great war left her with a wider dominion than that with which she was endowed when she plunged into the struggle; but it left her also with augmented power and prestige, a settled sense of security, and a steeled spirit of resolution--elements not measurable on the scale of the map, but counting as immense factors in the government and development of oversea possessions.

The details of the British colonial empire during the storm epoch, are as follow:--

In Canada she governed a belt of country stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, divided for administrative purposes into two areas, one of which, Lower Canada--embracing the cities of Quebec and Montreal, and including the basin of the St. Lawrence--was populated principally by people of French origin. It would be too much to suppose that these colonists, who jealously preserved the French language and the French tradition, were indifferent to the doings of their kin across the water; and there were, indeed, many who cherished the hope that events would so shape themselves as to restore the authority of France in this part of the New World. But the habitant was Roman Catholic as well as French, and the hierarchy was profoundly distrustful of the regime which it regarded as the heritage of the hateful ideas of 1789. We may speculate as to what would have happened if Napoleon had set himself to woo the affections of the French Canadians. But throughout the great wars Canada remained loyal to the British connection, despite internal difficulties and discontents.

Great Britain also held Newfoundland, as well as those maritime provinces which have since become federated as part of the Dominion.

In South America she possessed British Guiana, and for a period, as related above, French Guiana also.

In the West Indies, in 1800, her flag flew over the entire crescent of the Windward and Leeward groups from Granada to the Virgins; she was

mistress of Trinidad, Tobago, Jamaica, the "still vexd" Bermudas and the whole bunch of the Bahamas; and she had interests in San Domingo. At the Peace of Amiens she retained only Trinidad of the islands captured during the war; and she presented no very stubborn resistance to the negro revolt that lost her any further control over the largest of the sugar islands.

She had the Cape of Good Hope in her custody in 1800, but weakly allowed it to be bartered away by diplomacy at Amiens; only, however, to reassert her power there six years later, when it became at length apparent to British statesmen--as it surely should have been obvious to them throughout--that Australia and India could not be secure while the chief southern harbour of Africa was in foreign possession.

Ceylon was retained as a sparkling jewel for the British crown when so much that had been won in fair fight was allowed to slip away. The capture of Java (1811) and its restoration to the Dutch belong to a later period; whilst the growth of British power in India scarcely falls within the scope of a brief review of the colonial situation, though of great importance in its effects.

Malta, which has usually been classed as a colony, though its principal value is rather strategic than colonial, was occupied by the British in September 1800, and the cat-footed efforts of Napoleonic diplomacy to get her out of the island made it a storm centre in European politics in these fiery years. Out she would not come, and did not. Neither Tzar nor Emperor could get her out, by plot or by arms; and there she still remains.

PART 4.

The position of the British in the South Seas demands special consideration, as being immediately related to our subject. In 1800 the only part of Australasia occupied by white people was Norfolk Island and the small area at Port Jackson shut in between the sea and a precipitous range of mountains that for thirteen years to come presented an unconquerable barrier to inland exploration, despite repeated endeavours to find a way across them. The settlement had spread only a few miles beyond the spot where Governor Arthur Phillip had resolved to locate his First Fleet company twelve years before. As yet no attempt had been made to occupy Tasmania, which had been determined to be an island only two years previously. New Zealand also was virgin ground for the European colonist. The Maori had it all to himself.

The means of defending the little colony, in the event of an attack during the war which raged from five years after its foundation till 1802, and again from 1803 for twelve years more, were insignificant. The population in 1800 numbered rather more than five thousand, only about one-half of whom were soldiers, officials, and free people.* (* The total population of Sydney, Parramatta, and Norfolk Island on January 1, 1801, was declared to be 5100, of whom 2492 were convicts--1431 men, 500 women, and 561 children. Of the remainder, 1887 were "free people," being neither on the civil nor the military establishment.) The remainder were

convicts, some of them being Irishmen transported for participation in the rebellion of 1798, including not a few men of education. These men were naturally writhing under a burning sense of defeat and oppression, and were still rebels at heart. They were incarcerated with a miscellaneous horde of criminals made desperate and resentful by harsh treatment. It is scarcely doubtful that if a French naval squadron had descended on the coast, the authorities would have had to face, not only an enemy's guns in Port Jackson, but an insurrection amongst the unhappy people whom the colony had been primarily founded to chastise. The immigration of a farming and artisan class was discouraged; and it is scarcely conceivable that, apart from the officials, the gaolers, and the military, who would have done their duty resolutely, there were any in the colony who, for affection, would have lifted a hand to defend the land in which they lived, and the regime which they hated.

There was at the Governor's command a small military force, barely sufficient to maintain discipline in a community in which there were necessarily dangerously turbulent elements;* (* In a report to Governor King, April 1805, Brevet-Major Johnson pointed out that the military were barely sufficient for mounting guard, and urged "the great want of an augmentation to the military forces of this colony" (Historical Records of New South Wales 6 183). Colonel Paterson, in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, 1804, remarked that "it will certainly appear evident that our military force at present is very inadequate" (Ibid 5 454). John Blaxland, in a letter to Lord Liverpool, 1809, wrote that "it is to be feared that if two frigates were to appear, the settlement is not capable of opposing any resistance" (Ibid 7 231). An unsigned memorandum in the Record Office, "bearing internal evidence of having been written by an officer who was in the colony during the Governorship of Hunter," pointed out that "a naval force is absolutely necessary on the coast of New South Wales...to protect the colony from an attack by the French from the Mauritius, which would have taken place long ago if the enemy had possessed a naval force equal to the enterprise" (Ibid 7 248 to 250).) but he was destitute of effective vessels for service afloat. When the navigator Flinders was wrecked in the Porpoise in August 1803--his own exploring ship, the Investigator, being by this time unseaworthy--Governor King had no other craft to give him for his return voyage than the decrepit Cumberland, a mere leaky little barge hardly fit for better uses than ferrying a placid lake. The colony was, in short, simply a kraal for yarding British undesirables and housing their keepers; its remoteness was an advantage for the purpose in view; and it never seemed to strike the officials in England who superintended its affairs, that the adequate defence of a gaol against foreign aggression was an undertaking that called for exertion or forethought. The unreluctant retrocession of the Cape to the Dutch in 1800 indicates that the interest of defending Australia was lost sight of in the midst of what appeared to be more pressing considerations.

It has been remarked above that there was a period when the peace of Australia was imperilled. The danger was obviated, certainly not because of the efficiency of the defence, but rather through lack of enterprise on the part of the Admiral in command of the French squadron in the Indian Ocean. It will be well to narrate the circumstances, together with

an incident which illustrates in an amusing manner the kind of man this officer was.

After the signing of the Treaty of Amiens, Bonaparte sent out a squadron commanded by Rear-Admiral Linois, conveying General Charles Decaen, who was commissioned to administer the former French possessions in India, which, under the terms of the treaty, were to be surrendered to France. But when the expedition arrived at Pondicherry, the Governor-General of India, Lord Wellesley, gave orders to his subordinates that no concessions were to be made to the French without his express authority; and as he stubbornly refused to give his warrant for surrendering an inch of territory, there was nothing for General Decaen to do but sail away to Mauritius, then, as already remarked, a French colony. Lord Wellesley acted under secret orders from the Secretary of State, Lord Hobart, dated October 17, 1802, only seven months after the treaty was signed, for the British Government did not believe in the permanency of the peace and did not desire the French to re-assert a footing in India, where their presence, in the event of a renewal of hostilities, would be dangerous.

When the war was renewed, Linois, with his squadron, was still in the Indian Ocean. The Isle of France was not a self-supporting colony, but had to depend on money and supplies obtained either from Europe or from the vessels of the East India Company, which, from time to time, were captured by French privateers and men-of-war. When Nelson shattered the naval power of France at Trafalgar in 1805, and vigilant British frigates patrolled the whole highway of commerce from Europe to the Cape of Good Hope, Decaen’s position became precarious. The supplies sent out to him were frequently captured by the enemy; and had it not been that Port Louis became a regular nest of adventurous French privateers--"pirates," the British called them--who frequently found a rich prey in the shape of heavily laden India merchantmen, his garrison must soon have been starved out.

The incident to which reference has been made occurred in 1804, and is probably without a parallel in naval history as an example of the effect of audacity acting on timidity. It was known that a convoy of ships belonging to the East India Company was to leave Canton early in the year. Linois, with five vessels, including his flagship, the Marengo, 74 guns, sailed for the Straits of Malacca to intercept them. On February 14, near Polo Aor, to the north-east of Singapore, the French sighted the convoy, sixteen Company ships, fourteen merchantmen and a brig, all laden with tea, silks, and other rich merchandise.

The East India Company’s vessels carried guns, but they were not equipped for facing heavily armed men-of-war. Their crews were not trained fighting men; they were deeply laden, and their decks were heavily cumbered. Moreover, they were not protected by a naval squadron; and had Rear-Admiral Linois been a commander of daring, initiative, and resource, the greater part, or the whole, of this enormous mass of floating treasure might have fallen like a ripe peach into his hands.

But he had to contend with an English sailor of astounding and quite picturesque assurance in Nathaniel Dance, the commodore of the fleet.

Dance fully expected, when he left Canton, that he would meet French raiders, though he was astonished when he saw five sail under the tricolour bearing up towards him. But he had thought out what he intended to do if attacked; and, partly by courage, partly by a superb piece of "bluff," he succeeded completely.

Before sailing, the Company ships had been freshly painted. Their gun embrasures showed up more fearsome to the eye of imagination than they were in reality. Dance also carried blue ensigns, which were hoisted on four of his craft when the French made their appearance. He resorted to this device with the deliberate purpose of making the strongest vessels of his convoy look like British men-of-war. In fact, he commanded a fleet of opulent merchantmen, the best of which, by the mere use of brushes and pots of paint, and by the hoisting of a few yards of official bunting, were made to resemble fighting ships. But, wonder of wonders! this scarecrow strategy struck terror into the heart of a real Rear-Admiral, and, as a French historian somewhat lugubriously, but quite candidly, acknowledges: "Les ruses de Dance reussirent; les flammes bleues, les canons de bois, les batteries peintes, produisirent leur effet."

No sooner did the French squadron appear, than Dance drew up his convoy in two lines, with the fifteen smaller vessels under the lee of the sixteen larger ones, which presented their painted broadsides to the foe. It was a manoeuvre which threatened a determination to fight, and Linois was disposed to be cautious. He was puzzled by the number of ships, having been informed by an American captain at Batavia that only seventeen were to leave Canton. The larger fleet, and the blue ensigns fluttering from four masts, imbued him with a spirit of reluctance which he dignified with the name of prudence. As a naval historian puts it, "The warlike appearance of the sixteen ships, the regularity of their manoeuvres, and the boldness of their advance, led the French Admiral to deliberate whether a part of them were not cruisers."* (* James, Naval History 3 247. There is a contemporary account of the incident in the Gentleman's Magazine (1804) volume 74 pages 963 and 967.) Linois did not like to attack, as darkness was approaching, but argued that if the bold face put upon the matter by the British were merely a stratagem, they would attempt to fly in the night; in which case he would not hesitate to chase them. But Dance did nothing of the kind. He had taken his enemy's measure; or, to quote the French historian again, "il comprit l'etat moral de son adversaire." He maintained his formation during the night, keeping blue lights burning on the four ships which sported the blue ensign, to enforce the illusion that they were the naval escort of the convoy, and were eager for battle. In the morning Linois was quite satisfied that he really had to contend with a fleet pugnaciously inclined, which, if he tried to hurt them, would probably hurt him more. Cheers broke from the British decks as the Marengo bore up. Dance then manoeuvred as if his intention were to shut in the French squadron between two lines, and rake them on both flanks. This clever movement so scared the Rear-Admiral that he determined to run. A shot was fired from his flagship, which killed one man and wounded another on the Royal George; whereupon the British sailors fired their guns in return, and kept up a furious, but quite harmless, cannonade for forty minutes. Not a single French ship was hit; but under cover of the thick smoke which "the

engagement" occasioned, Linois and his squadron sailed away, and left the cheering Britons in the peace which they so certainly required, but had so audaciously pretended that they did not in the least degree desire.

Dance became temporarily a national hero. The Englishman enjoys a joke, and at a period of extreme tension the impudent exploit of the commodore provoked a roar of delighted and derisive laughter throughout the British Isles. He was feted by the City of London, knighted by King George, presented with a sword of honour, and endowed by the Company with a handsome fortune.

On the other hand, Napoleon was furious. Linois "has made the French flag the laughing stock of the universe," he wrote to his Minister of Marine, Decres.* (* Correspondance de Napoleon I (1858 to 1870) volume 9 document 8024.) Again he said, "The conduct of Linois is miserable"; and in a third letter, summing up in a crisp sentence the cause of so many French failures on the blue water, he said: "All the maritime expeditions that have been despatched since I have been at the head of the Government have failed because our admirals see double, and have found, I do not know where, that one can make war without running any risks;" "it is honour that I wish them to conserve, rather than a few wooden vessels and some men." It was while still smarting under this same indignity, and urging his Minister to hurry the sending of ships with supplies for the support of the Isle of France, that Napoleon made one of his most famous retorts. Decres, with the obsequiousness of a courtier, had written that if the Emperor insisted on ordering certain ships to be despatched, "I should recognise the will of God, and should send them." "I will excuse you from comparing me to God," wrote Napoleon; and, prodding the dilatory Minister again to make haste, he wrote, "You can surely, to meet the needs of our colonies, send from several ports vessels laden with flour. There is no need to be God for that!"* (* Correspondance, volume 17 document 13,960.)

Now, if instead of the timid Linois, the French squadron in the Indian Ocean had been commanded by an Admiral endowed with the qualities of dash, daring, and enterprise, the consequences to the weak little British settlement at Sydney would have been disastrous. After Trafalgar, British interests in the South and the East were more amply safeguarded. But before that great event, Linois had magnificent opportunities for doing mischief. Port Jackson would have been a rich prize. Stores, which the Isle of France badly needed, could have been obtained there plentifully. Ships from China frequently made it a port of call, preferring to take the route through the recently discovered Bass Straits than to run the hazard of capture by crossing the Indian Ocean. It was just a lucky accident that the enemy’s admiral was a nervous gentleman who was afraid to take risks. General Decaen, a fine soldier, openly cursed his nautical colleague; but nothing could strike a spirit of vigorous initiative into the breast of Linois. He was always afraid that if he struck he would be struck at--in which view he was undoubtedly right.

Did Napoleon himself realise that there was so rich a prize in Port Jackson? Not until it was too late. In 1810, when he was fitting out another expedition for aggressive service in the Indian Ocean, he probably remembered what he had read in Peron’s account of the Voyage de

Decouvertes aux Terres Australes about the British colony there, and directed that the new squadron should "take the English colony of Port Jackson, which is to the south of the Isle of France, and where considerable resources will be found" ("faire prendre la colonie anglaise de Jackson"--sic),* (* Correspondance, volume 20 document 16,544.) But the task was well-nigh hopeless then, and the squadron never sailed. Probably it would not have reached the Indian Ocean if it had left Europe, for the Cape, which was in Dutch hands when Linois had his great chance, was recaptured by the British in January 1806. In 1810 Admirals Pellew and Bertie were in command of strong British forces, and Lord Minto, the Governor-General of India, was determined to root the French out of the Isle of France, and clear India of danger from that source. They succeeded, and Mauritius has been British ever since.

We must now leave the sphere of conflict in which the destinies of the world were being shaped, and enter upon another phase of this history. The reader will:

"slip across the summer of the world,
Then, after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,"

--will accompany for a while an illustrious British explorer in his task of filling up the map of the globe.

CHAPTER 1. FLINDERS AND THE INVESTIGATOR.

The Investigator at Kangaroo Island.
Thoroughness of Flinders' work.
His aims and methods.
His explorations; the theory of a Strait through Australia.
Completion of the map of the continents.
A direct succession of great navigators: Cook, Bligh, Flinders, and Franklin.
What Flinders learnt in the school of Cook: comparison between the healthy condition of his crew and the scurvy-stricken company on the French vessels.

On April 7, 1802, His Majesty's ship Investigator, 334 tons, Commander Matthew Flinders, was beating off the eastern extremity of Kangaroo Island, endeavouring to make the mainland of Terra Australis, to follow the course of discovery and survey for which she had been commissioned. The winds were very baffling for pursuing his task according to the carefully scientific method which Flinders had prescribed for himself. He had declared to Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, before he left England, that he would endeavour so to explore the then unknown coasts of the vast island for which he himself afterwards suggested the name Australia, "that no person shall have occasion to come after me to make further discoveries."* (* Flinders to Banks, April 29, 1801, Historical Records of New South Wales 4 351.) This principle of thoroughness distinguished his work throughout the voyage. Writing thirteen years later, after the long agony of his imprisonment in

Mauritius, he said that his "leading object had been to make so accurate an investigation of the shores of Terra Australis, that no future voyage to the country should be necessary" for the purpose; and that had not circumstances been too strong for him, "nothing of importance should have been left for future discoverers upon any part of these extensive coasts."* (* Flinders, A Voyage to Terra Australis 2 143.) Nobody can study Flinders' beautiful charts without recognising them as the work of a master of his craft; and so well did he fulfil his promise, until the debility of his ship and a chain of misfortunes interposed to prevent him, that the Admiralty charts in current use are substantially those which Flinders made over a hundred years ago.* (* Sir J.K. Laughton in Dictionary of National Biography 19 328.)

His method, though easy enough to pursue in a modern steamer, comparatively indifferent to winds and currents, was one demanding from a sailing ship hard, persistent, straining work, with unflagging vigilance and great powers of endurance. It was this. The Investigator was kept all day so close along shore that the breaking water was visible from the deck, and no river mouth or inlet could escape notice. When the weather was too rough to enable this to be done with safety, Flinders stationed himself at the masthead, scanning every reach of the shore-line. "Before retiring to rest," he wrote, "I made it a practice to finish the rough chart for the day, as also my astronomical observations and bearings." When darkness fell, the ship hauled off from the coast, and every morning, as soon after daylight as possible, she was brought in-shore again, great care being taken to resume the work at precisely the point where it was suspended the night before. "This plan," he wrote, "to see and lay down everything myself, required constant attention and much labour, but was absolutely necessary to obtaining that accuracy of which I was desirous."

Before Flinders reached Kangaroo Island, he had, in this painstaking manner, discovered and mapped the stretch of coast westward from the head of the Great Australian Bight, charted all the islands, and, by following the two large gulfs, Spencer's and St. Vincent's, to their extremities, had shattered the theory commonly favoured by geographers before his time, that a passage would be found cleaving the continent from the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Strait which George Bass had discovered in 1798.* (* Pinkerton, in his Modern Geography (1807) volume 2 588, published after Flinders had made his principal discoveries, but before the results were known, reflected the general opinion in the passage: "Some suppose that this extensive region, when more thoroughly investigated, will be found to consist of two or three vast islands, intersected by narrow seas." The Committee of the Institute of France, which drew up the instructions for the expedition commanded by Baudin, directed him to search for a supposed strait dividing Australia longitudinally into "two great and nearly equal islands" (Peron, Voyage de Decouvertes aux Terres Australes 1 5). With these passages may be compared the following from Kerr's General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels, published in 1824, ten years after the appearance of Flinders' book: "There are few voyages from which more important accessions to geographical knowledge have been derived than from this voyage of Captain Flinders, especially when we reflect on the great probability that New Holland...[observe that

Kerr had not adopted the name Australia, which Flinders suggested only in a footnote] will soon rank high in population and wealth. Before his voyage it was doubtful whether New Holland was not divided into two great islands, by a strait passing between Bass Straits and the Gulf of Carpentaria. Captain Flinders has put an end to all doubts on this point. He examined the coast in the closest and most accurate manner; he found, indeed, two great openings; these he sailed up to their termination; and consequently, as there were no other openings, and these were mere inlets, New Holland can no longer be supposed to be divided into two great islands. It must be regarded as forming one very large one; or rather, from its immense size, a species of continent" (Kerr 18 462).)

That part of the southern coast of Australia lying between Cape Leeuwin and Fowler Bay, in the Bight, had been explored prior to Flinders' time, partly by Captain George Vancouver, one of Cook's men, in 1791, and partly in 1792 by the French commander, Bruni Dentrecasteaux, who was despatched in search of the gallant La Perouse--"vanished trackless into blue immensity."* (* Carlyle, French Revolution book 2 cap 5.) Flinders carefully revised what they had done, commencing his elaborate, independent survey immediately after the Investigator made the Leeuwin, on December 6, 1801. He had therefore been just four months in this region, when he left his anchorage at Kangaroo Island--four months of incessant daily and nightly labour diligently directed to the task in hand. Always generous in his praise of good work, he paid a warm tribute to the quality of the charts prepared by Beautemps Beaupre, "geographical engineer" of La Recherche, Dentrecasteaux's corvette. "Perhaps no chart of a coast so little known as this is, will bear a comparison with its original better than this of M. Beaupre," he said; and though he put forward his own as being fuller in detail and more accurate, he was careful to point out that he made no claim for superior workmanship, and that, indeed, he would have been open to reproach if, after having followed the coast with Beaupre's chart in hand, he had not effected improvements where circumstances did not permit his predecessor to make so close an examination. It is an attractive characteristic of Flinders, that he never missed an opportunity of appreciating valuable service in other navigators.

But from the time when the Investigator passed the head of the Bight, the whole of the coast-line traversed was virginal to geographical science. With a clean sheet of paper, Flinders began to chart a new stretch of the earth's outline, and to link up the undiscovered with the known portions of the great southern continent. Our interest in his work is intensified by the reflection that of all the coasts of the habitable earth, this was the last important portion still to be discovered. True it is that research in the arctic and antarctic circles remained to be pursued, and still remains. Man will not cease his efforts till he knows his planet in its entirety, though the price of the knowledge may be high. But when he has compassed the extreme ends of the globe, he will not have found a rood of ground upon which any one will ever wish to live. The earth lust of the nations is not provoked by thoughts of the two poles. Ruling out the frozen regions, therefore, as places where discovery is pursued without thought of future habitation, it is a striking fact that this voyage of Flinders opened up the ultimate belt of the earth's contour

hitherto unknown. The continents were finally unveiled when he concluded his labours. Europe, the centre of direction, had comprehended the form of Asia, had encircled Africa, had brought America within ken and control. It had gradually pieced together a knowledge of Australia, all but the extensive area the greater part of which it was left for Flinders to reveal. The era of important modern coastal discovery within habitable regions, which commenced with the researches directed by Prince Henry the Navigator from 1426 to 1460, and attained to brilliancy with Columbus in 1492 and Vasco da Gama in 1497, ended with Flinders in 1802 and 1803. He ranges worthily with that illustrious company of "men full of activity, stirrers abroad, and searchers of the remote parts of the world," of whom Richard Hakluyt speaks, and is outshone by none of them in the faithfulness with which his work was done, and in all the qualities that make up the man of high capacity and character entrusted with a great enterprise.

When Flinders was appointed to the command of the Investigator, he was only twenty-seven years of age. But he had already won distinction by his demonstration that Bass Strait was a strait, and not a gulf, a fact not proved by George Bass's famous voyage from Sydney to Westernport in a whale-boat. His circumnavigation of Tasmania--then called Van Diemen's Land--in the Norfolk; the discovery of the Tamar estuary and Port Dalrymple; some excellent nautical surveying among the islands to the north-west of Tasmania; and an expedition along the Queensland coast, had also earned for him the confidence of his official superiors. His ardour for discovery, and the exact, scientific character of his charts and observations, won him a powerful and steadfast friend in Sir Joseph Banks, who had been with Cook in the Endeavour in 1768 to 1771, and never lost his interest in Australian exploration. At the beginning of his naval career Flinders had tasted the "delights of battle." As a midshipman on the Bellerophon (Captain Pasley), he played his small part on the "glorious first of June" (1794), when "Black Dick," Lord Howe, won his greatly vaunted victory over the French off Brest.

But before this event his tastes and aspirations had set in the direction of another branch of the naval service. A voyage to the South Seas and the West Indies under Bligh, in the Providence, in 1791, had revealed to his imagination the glory of discovery and the vastness and beauty of the world beyond European horizons. The fame and achievements of Cook were still fresh and wonderful in the mouths of all who followed the sea. Bligh, a superb sailor--not even the enemies whom he made by his rough tongue and brusque manner denied that--taught him to be a scientific navigator; and when he threaded the narrow, coral-walled waters of Torres Strait, he knew that to the southward were coasts as yet unmarked on any chart, seas as yet unploughed by any keel. For this work of exploration Flinders nourished a passion as intense as that which inferior natures have had for love, avarice, or honours. It absorbed all his life and thought; and opportunity, becoming in his case the handmaid of capacity, was abundantly justified by accomplishment.

There is one striking fact which serves to "place" Flinders among navigators. As has just been observed, he learnt his practical navigation under Bligh, on that historically unfortunate captain's second

bread-fruit expedition, when he was entrusted with the care of the scientific instruments. Now, Bligh had perfected his navigation under Cook, on the Resolution, and actually chose the landing-place in Kealakeakua Bay, where the greatest English seaman who ever lived was slain. Here is a school of great sailors: Cook the master of Bligh, Bligh the master of Flinders; and Flinders in turn had on board the Investigator as a midshipman, his cousin, John Franklin, to whom he taught navigation, and who acquired from him that "ardent love of geographical research" which brought him immortal fame, and a grave amongst the ice-packs and the snows of the North-West Passage.* (* See Markham, Life of Sir John Franklin page 43 and Traill, Life of Franklin page 16. Traill's graceful sentences are worth transcribing: "The example of the fine seaman and enthusiastic explorer under whom he served must indeed, for a lad of Franklin's ardent temperament, have been an education in itself. Throughout his whole life he cherished the warmest admiration for the character of Matthew Flinders, and in later years he welcomed the opportunity of paying an enduring tribute to his old commander's memory in the very region of the world which his discoveries had done so much to gain for civilisation." It is pleasant to find Flinders speaking cordially of his young pupil in a letter written during the voyage. "He is a very fine youth, and there is every probability of his doing credit to the Investigator and himself.") There is nothing comparable with this direct succession of illustrious masters and pupils in the history of navigation. The names of all four are indelibly written on the map of the world. Three of them--Cook, Flinders, and Franklin--are among our very foremost navigators and discoverers, men whom a race proud of the heritage of the sea will for ever hold in honour and affection; whilst the fourth, Bligh, though his reputation is wounded by association with two mutinies, was in truth a daring and a brilliant seaman, and a brave man in a fight. Nelson especially thanked him for noble service at Copenhagen, and his achievement in working a small, open boat from the mid-Pacific, where the mutinous crew of the Bounty dropped him, through Torres Strait to Timor, a distance of 3620 miles, stands memorably on the credit side of his account.

See what it meant to have been trained in a school that observed the rules and respected the traditions of James Cook. When at the end of his long voyage of nine months and nine days, Flinders took the Investigator through Port Jackson heads into harbour (Sunday, May 9, 1802), he had not a sick man on board.* (* Voyage 1 226.) His crew finished hearty, browned, and vigorous. He was able to write from the Cape of Good Hope that "officers and crew were, generally speaking, in better health than on the day we sailed from Spithead, and not in less good spirits." Scrupulous attention to cleanliness and hygiene produced this result in an age when scurvy was more to be feared than shipwreck. On every fine day the decks below and the cockpit were washed, dried with stoves, and sprinkled with vinegar. Care was taken to prevent the crew from sleeping in wet clothes. At frequent intervals beds, chests, and bags were opened out and exposed to the sweetening influences of fresh air and sunshine. Personal cleanliness was enforced. Lime-juice and other anti-scorbutics were frequently served out: a precautionary measure which originated in Cook's day, and which down to our own times has caused all British sailors to be popularly known as "lime-juicers" in the American Navy. The

dietary scale and the cooking were subjects of careful thought. This keen young officer of twenty-seven looked after his company of eighty-seven people with as grave and kindly a concern as if he were a grey-bearded father to them all; and was liberally rewarded by their affection. During his imprisonment in Mauritius, one of his men stayed with him voluntarily for several years, enduring the unpleasantness of life in confinement far away from home, out of sheer devotion to his commander; and did not leave until Flinders, becoming hopeless of liberation, insisted on his taking advantage of an opportunity of going to England.

There is a touching proof of Flinders' tender regard for his men in the naming of a small group of islands to the west of the bell-mouth of Spencer's Gulf. A boat's crew commanded by the mate, John Thistle, was drowned there, through the boat capsizing. Thistle was an excellent seaman, who had been one of Bass's whale-boat crew in 1798, and had volunteered for service with the Investigator. Not only did Flinders name an island after him, and another after a midshipman, Taylor, who perished on the same occasion, but he gave to each of the islands near Cape Catastrophe the name of one of the seamen who lost their lives in the accident. In a country where men are valued for their native worth rather than on account of rank or wealth, such as is happily the case to a very large degree in Australia--and this is a far finer thing than mere political democracy--perhaps nothing in the career of Flinders is more likely to ensure respect for his memory, apart from the value of his achievements, than this perpetuation of the names of the sailors who died in the service.

Throughout the voyage he promoted amusements among his people; "and when the evenings were fine the drum and fife announced the forecastle to be the scene of dancing; nor did I discourage other playful amusements which might occasionally be more to the taste of the sailors, and were not unseasonable."* (* Voyage 1 36.) The work may have been strenuous, and the commander was unsparing of his own energies; but the life was happy, and above all it was healthy. The pride which Flinders had in the result was modestly expressed: "I had the satisfaction to see my people orderly and full of zeal for the service in which we were engaged." Really, it was a splendid achievement in itself, and it showed that, if the hardship of life in a small ship, on a long voyage, could not be abolished, at least horror could be banished from it.

Compare this genial record with that of the French exploring ships Le Geographe and Le Naturaliste, which were quite as well equipped for a long voyage. They had, it is true, been longer at sea, but they had an advantage not open to Flinders in being able to refit at Mauritius, had rested again for some weeks at Timor, and had spent a considerable time in the salubrious climate of southern Tasmania, where there was an abundance of fresh food and water. When, on June 23, 1802, Le Geographe appeared off Port Jackson, to solicit help from Governor King, it was indeed "a ghastly crew" that she had on board. Her officers and crew were rotten with scurvy. Scarcely one of them was fit to haul a rope or go aloft. Out of one hundred and seventy men, only twelve were capable of any kind of duty, and only two helmsmen could take their turn at the wheel. Not a soul aboard, of any rank, was free from the disease.* (*

Peron, Voyage de Decouvertes 1 331 to 340; Flinders, Voyage 1 230.) Of twenty-three scientific men and artists who sailed from Havre, in 1800, only three returned to France with the expedition, and before its work was over the Commander, Baudin, and several of the staff were dead. The chief naturalist, Francois Peron, and one of the surgeons, Taillefer, have left terrible accounts of the sufferings endured. Putrid water, biscuits reduced almost to dust by weevils, and salt meat so absolutely offensive to sight and smell that "the most famished of the crew frequently preferred to suffer the agonies of hunger" rather than eat it--these conditions, together with neglect of routine sanitary precautions, produced a pitiable state of debility and pain, that made the ship like an ancient city afflicted with plague. Indeed, the vivid narratives of Thucydides and Boccaccio, when they counted:

"the sad degrees
Upon the plague's dim dial, caught the tone
Of a great death that lay upon the land,"

are not more haggard in their naturalism than is Taillefer's picture of the sufferings of the sailors to whom he ministered. Their skin became covered with tumours, which left ugly black patches; where hair grew appeared sores "the colour of wine lees"; their lips shrivelled, revealing gums mortified and ulcerated. They exhaled a breath so fetid in odour that Taillefer loathed having to administer to them such remedies as he had to give; and at one part of the voyage even his stock of drugs was depleted, so great was the demand upon his resources. Their joints became stiff, their muscles flaccid and contracted, and the utter prostration to which they were reduced made him regret that they retained so much of their intellectual faculties as to make them feel keenly the weight of despair.* (* Voyage de Decouvertes 1 340.)

When Le Geographe stood outside Sydney Harbour, a boat's crew of Flinders' bluejackets from the Investigator, themselves fresh from their own long voyage, had to be sent out to work her into port. So enfeebled were the French sailors that they could not even muster sufficient energy to bring their vessel to the place where succour awaited them. While we deplore this tale of distress, we can but mark the striking contrast with the English vessel and her jolly crew. Truly, it meant something for a commander to have learnt to manage a ship in a school nourished on the example of Cook, whose title to fame might rest on his work as a practical reformer of life at sea, even if his achievements as a discoverer were not so incomparably brilliant.

We must now return to the Investigator, which, at the commencement of the chapter, we left fighting with a contrary wind east of Kangaroo Island. Although the sloop quitted her anchorage early on the morning of April 7, at eight o'clock in the evening she had made very little headway across Backstairs Passage. On the 8th, she was near enough to the mainland for Flinders to resume his charting, and late in the afternoon of that day occurred an incident to which the next chapter will be devoted. Meanwhile, it is important to observe that had the wind blown from the west or south-west, instead of from the east or south-east, Flinders would have accomplished the survey of the coast between Cape Jervis, at

the entrance of St. Vincent's Gulf, and Cape Banks, before the French discovery ship, Le Geographe, emerged from Bass Strait on her voyage westward. The wind that filled Captain Baudin's sails, and drove his ship forward towards the seas in which the Investigator was making important discoveries, was the wind that delayed Flinders at Kangaroo Island. Had the weather been more accommodating to the English captain and less to the French, there cannot be the slightest doubt that even the fifty leagues of coast, or thereabouts, which are all that can be claimed to have been discovered by Baudin, would have been first charted by Flinders. But the French expedition was so unfortunate, both as to results and reputation--so undeservedly unfortunate, in some respects, as will be shown in later chapters--that this small measure of success may be conceded ungrudgingly. It is, indeed, somewhat to be regretted that the small part of the Australian coast which was genuinely their own discovery, should not have been in a more interesting region than was actually the case; for the true "Terre Napoleon" is no better for the most part than a sterile waste, with a back country of sand, swamp, and mallee scrub, populated principally by rabbits, dingoes, and bandicoots.

CHAPTER 2. THE AFFAIR OF ENCOUNTER BAY.

Meeting of the Investigator and Le Geographe in Encounter Bay.
Flinders cautious.
Interview of the two captains.
Peron's evidence.
The chart of Bass Strait.
Second interview: Baudin inquisitive.
Baudin's account of his explorations.

On the afternoon of April 8,* (* In his manuscript journal, which was used by the Quarterly reviewer of the first volume of the Voyage de Decouvertes, in August 1810, Flinders gave the date on which he met Le Geographe as April 9th (Quarterly Review volume 4 52). But there is no contradiction. In his journal Flinders gave the date of the nautical day, which commenced at noon. As he met Baudin's corvette in the late afternoon, it was, by nautical reckoning, April 9th. But by the calendar, the civil day commencing at midnight, the date was April 8th, as stated by Flinders in his published volumes, by both Peron and Louis de Freycinet, and in the log of Le Geographe. A similar difference of dates, which puzzled Labilliere in writing his Early History of Victoria 1 108, occurs as to the first sighting of Port Phillip by Flinders. It is explained in exactly the same way.) the man at the masthead of the Investigator reported a white rock ahead. He was mistaken. Glasses were turned towards it, and as the distance lessened it became apparent that the white object was a sail. The sloop was at this time in latitude 35 degrees 40 minutes south, longitude 138 degrees 58 minutes east. To meet another vessel in this region, many leagues from regular trading routes, in a part of the world hitherto undiscovered, was surprising. The Investigator stood on her course, and as the strange ship became more clearly defined it was evident that she was making towards the British sloop. Flinders therefore "cleared for action in case of being attacked."

He knew that the French Government had sent out ships having like objects with his own; he knew that some influential persons in England, especially the Court of Directors of the East India Company, were uneasy and suspicious about French designs; and he had been fully instructed by the Admiralty as to the demeanour he should maintain if he met vessels flying a hostile flag. But though his duty prescribed that he must not offer any provocation, he could not forget that when he left Europe Great Britain and France were still at war, and preparation for extremities was a measure of mere prudence.

The stranger proved to be "a heavy-looking ship without any top-gallant masts up." On the Investigator hoisting her colours, Le Geographe "showed a French ensign, and afterwards an English jack forward, as we did a white flag." Flinders manoeuvred so as to keep his broadside to the stranger, "lest the flag of truce should be a deception." But the demeanour of the French being purely pacific, he had a boat hoisted out and went on board, Le Geographe having also hove to.

On the French vessel, meanwhile, similar curiosity had been provoked as to the identity of the ship sailing east. Captain Baudin’s men had been engaged during the morning in harpooning dolphins, which they desired for the sake of the flesh. Peron, in his narrative, waxes almost hysterically joyous about the good fortune that brought along a school of these fish just as the ship’s company were almost perishing for want of fresh food. They appeared, he says, like a gift from Heaven.* (* "Cette peche heureuse nous parut comme un bienfait du ciel. Alors, en effet, le terrible scorbut avoit commence ses ravages, et les salaisons pourries et rongees de vers auxquelles nous etions reduits depuis plusieurs mois precipitoient chaque jour l’affreux developpement de ce fleau." Voyage de Decouvertes 1 323.) Unlike the bronzed and healthy crew of the Investigator, the company on Le Geographe were suffering severely from scurvy. The virulence of the disease increased daily. They were rejoicing at the capture of nine large dolphins, which would supply them with a feast of fresh meat, when the look-out man signalled that a sail was in sight.* (* Mr. T. Ward, in his Rambles of an Australian Naturalist (1907) page 153, relates that in 1889 he harpooned a large dolphin, Grampus gris, in King George’s Sound, and that whalers told him that dolphins were at one time common in the Bight, in schools of two and three hundred. As to dolphin flesh as food, the reader may like to be reminded that Hawkins’s men, in 1565, found dolphins "of very good colour and proportion to behold, and no less delicate in taste" (Hakluyt’s Voyages edition of 1904 10 61). So also in 1705 a voyager to Maryland related the capture of dolphins, "a beautiful fish to see...it is also a good fish to eat." "Narrative of a Voyage to Maryland," printed from manuscript in American Historical Review 12 328.)

At first it was considered that the ship was Le Naturaliste, the consort of Le Geographe, the two vessels having become separated in a storm off the Tasmanian coast. But as the Investigator steered towards the French and hoisted her flag, the mistake was corrected.

Flinders took Brown, the naturalist, with him on board, because he was a good French scholar; but Captain Baudin spoke English "so as to be

understood," and the conversation was therefore conducted for the most part in that language. Brown was the only person present at the first interview on the 8th, and at the second on the following morning;* (* "No person was present at our conversations except Mr. Brown" (Flinders, Voyage 1 190). Robert Brown was a very celebrated botanist. Humboldt styled him "botanicorum facile princeps." His Prodromus Florae Novae Hollandiae is a classic of price.) both taking place in the French captain's cabin. Peron, in the first volume of the Voyage de Decouvertes, wrote as though he were present and heard what occurred between the two commanders. "En nous fournissant tous ces details M. Flinders se montre d'une grande reserve sur ses operations particulieres," he wrote; and again: "apres avoir converse plus d'une heure avec nous." But his testimony in this, as in several other respects, is not reliable. Baudin wrote no detailed account of the conversations, nor did Brown; but Flinders related what occurred with the minute care that was habitual with him. Peron's evidence is at best second-hand, and he supplemented it with such information as could be elicited by "pumping" the sailors in Flinders' boat.* (* "Nous apprimes toutefois par quelques-uns de ses matelots qu'il avoit eu beaucoup a souffrir de ces memes vents de la partie du Sud qui nous avoient ete si favorables." The boatmen were not questioned by Peron himself, who at this time could not speak English (Freycinet, Voyage de Decouvertes 2 Preface page 17). Freycinet admits that Peron was not present at the interviews, but says that Baudin related what took place with "more or less exactitude." But as Freycinet was not present himself either at the interviews or on the ship when Baudin related what occurred, how could he know that the version of the commander--at whom, after Baudin's death, he never missed an opportunity of sneering--was merely "more or less" exact?) Even then he blundered, for some of the things stated by him were not only contrary to fact, but could not have been ascertained from Baudin, from Flinders, or from the sailors.

Peron stated, for example, that Flinders said that he had been accompanied from England by a second vessel, which had become separated from him by a violent tempest. There had been no second vessel, and Flinders could have made no such assertion. Again, Peron wrote that Flinders said that, hindered by contrary winds, he had not been able to penetrate behind the islands of St. Peter and St. Francis, in Nuyts Archipelago. Flinders made no such absurd statement. He had followed the coast behind those islands with the utmost particularity. His track, with soundings, is shown on his large chart of the section.* (* On this statement the Quarterly reviewer of 1810 bluntly wrote: "Now, we will venture not only to assert that all this is a direct falsehood (for we have seen both the journal and charts of Captain Flinders, which are fortunately arrived safe in this country), but also to pledge ourselves that no such observations are to be found either in Captain Baudin's journal or in the logbook of the Geographe." Quarterly Review 4 52. It was a good guess. No such observation is contained in the printed log of Le Geographe.) Once more, Peron stated that Flinders said that he had lost a boat and eight men in the same gale as had endangered the French ships in Bass Strait. Flinders had lost John Thistle, an officer to whom he was deeply attached, and a crew of eight men off Cape Catastrophe, but the incident occurred during a sudden squall. Moreover, Thistle and his

companions were drowned on February 21, whilst the storm in the Strait--as Baudin told Flinders--occurred exactly a month later.

When Flinders got on board Le Geographe, he was received by an officer, of whom he inquired for the commander. Baudin was pointed out to him, and conducted him and Brown into the captain's cabin. Flinders then "requested Baudin to show me his passport from the Admiralty, and when it was found, and I had perused it, I offered him mine from the French marine minister, but he put it back without inspection." The incident serves to remind us that both commanders believed their nations to be at war at this time. As a matter of fact, just a fortnight before the meeting in Encounter Bay, diplomacy had patched up the brittle truce ironically known as the Peace of Amiens (March 25). But neither Flinders nor Baudin could have known that there was even a prospect of the cessation of hostilities. Europe, when they last had touch of its affairs, was still clanging with battle and warlike preparations, and the red star of the Corsican had not yet reached its zenith. Baudin's readiness to produce his own passport when "requested"--in a style prompt if not peremptory, it would seem--and his indifference about that of the English commander, should be noted as the first of a series of facts which establish the purely peaceful character of the French expedition.

Baudin talked freely about the work upon which he had been engaged in Tasmanian waters. Flinders inquired concerning a large island said to lie in the western entrance of Bass Strait--that is, King Island--but Baudin "had not seen it and seemed to doubt much of its existence." As a matter of fact, Le Geographe had sailed quite close to the island, as indicated on the track-chart showing her course, and that it should have been missed indicated that the look-out was not very vigilant. Curiously enough, too, Baudin marked down on his chart, presumably as the result of this inquiry of Flinders, an island "believed to exist," but he put it in the wrong place.

An incident that appealed to Flinders' dry sense of humour occurred in reference to a chart of Bass Strait which Baudin had with him. This chart was one which had been drawn from George Bass's sketch by Flinders himself, and incorporated with his own more scientific chart of the north coast of Tasmania and the adjacent islands. Bass had traversed, in his whale-boat, the southern coast of Victoria as far as Westernport, but not being a surveyor he had furnished only a rough outline of the lay of the shore. Up to this time Baudin had not inquired the name of the commander of the Investigator, and it was from not knowing to whom he was talking that he fell into a blunder which the politeness, native to a French gentleman, would certainly have made him wish to avoid. He began to criticise the chart, finding great fault with the north side, but commending the drawing of the south--that is, of northern Tasmania and the islands near it. "On my pointing out a note upon the chart explaining that the north side of the Strait was seen only in an open boat by Mr. Bass, who had no good means of fixing either latitude or longitude, he appeared surprised, not having before paid attention to it. I told him that some other and more particular charts of the Strait and its neighbourhood had since been published, and that if he would keep company until next morning I would bring him a copy, with a small memoir

belonging to them. This was agreed to, and I returned with Mr. Brown to the Investigator."

On the following morning Flinders and Brown again visited Le Geographe with the promised chart. At the conclusion of this second interview, Baudin requested that, should the Investigator fall in with Le Naturaliste, Flinders would inform her captain that it was his intention to sail round to Port Jackson as soon as the bad weather set in. "On my asking the name of the captain of Le Naturaliste, he bethought himself to ask mine, and finding it to be the same as the author of the chart which he had been criticising, expressed not a little surprise, but had the politeness to congratulate himself on seeing me." In a letter to Banks, Flinders said that Baudin "expressed some surprise at meeting me, whom he knew by name."* (* Historical Records of New South Wales 4 755.) He had the name, of course, upon Flinders' chart of 1799.* (* The new chart which Flinders gave to Baudin was published after Le Geographe left Havre. The chart which he had in his possession was the one advertised in the Moniteur on 8th Vendemiaire, Revolutionary Year 10. (September 30, 1800): "Nouvelle carte du detroit de Basse, situe entre la Nouvelle Galles Meridionale, a la Nouvelle Hollande, lequel separe ces deux parties; avec la route du vaisseau qui l'a parcouru et partie de la cote a l'est de la Nouvelle Hollande, levee par Flinders. Prix deux francs." This chart had been reproduced by the French Department of Marine from the one published by Flinders in England in 1799, and several copies of it had been supplied to Baudin and his officers for the use of the expedition, though it was also offered for sale. See the Moniteur, 27 Thermidor, Revolutionary Year 11 (August 15, 1803), as to the engraving of the chart at the French depot for the use of the expedition.)

At the second interview Baudin was more inquisitive than he had been on the previous day. He had then been more disposed to talk about his own discoveries in southern Tasmania than to ask questions about the Investigator's work. "It somewhat surprised me," said Flinders, "that Captain Baudin made no inquiries concerning my business upon this unknown coast, but as he seemed more desirous of communicating information I was happy to receive it." Another of the inaccuracies of Peron is that "M. Flinders showed a great reserve concerning his particular operations." There was no need of reserve, and none was shown. But "tact teaches when to be silent," as Disraeli's Mr. Wilton observed; and an occasion for the exercise of this virtue is presented when information likely to be valuable is being given. Reflection, and what his officers had been able to learn from Flinders' boat crew, however, had stimulated Baudin's curiosity. On the 9th, therefore, he asked questions. Flinders, so far from maintaining reserve, readily explained the discoveries he had made, and furnished Baudin with some useful information for his own voyage. He described how he had explored the whole of the south coast as far as the place of meeting;* (* Manuscript Journal.) related how he had obtained water at Port Lincoln by digging in the clay; pointed out Kangaroo Island across the water, where an abundance of fresh meat might be procured; "told him the name I had affixed to the island," in consequence of the marsupials shot there; and "as proof of the refreshment to be obtained at the island, pointed to the kangaroo skin caps worn by my boat's crew." The return made for this courtesy was that upon the Terre Napoleon maps

the name Flinders gave was ignored, and "L'Ile Decres" was scored upon it, this being done while the true discoverer was pent up in French custody in an island of the Indian Ocean.

The most interesting statement made by Baudin will be dealt with in the next chapter. The two commanders conversed on the 8th for about half an hour, and on the second occasion, when Flinders presented the new chart of Bass Strait, for a shorter period. Early on the morning of the 9th they bade each other adieu. Flinders returned to the Investigator, and the two ships sailed away--the French to retrace the coast already followed by Flinders, but to find nothing that was new, because he had left so little to be found; the English to proceed, first to King Island and Port Phillip, and then through Bass Strait to Port Jackson, where the two commanders met again.

CHAPTER 3. PORT PHILLIP.

Conflict of evidence between Baudin, Peron, and Freycinet as to whether the French ships had sighted Port Phillip.
Baudin's statement corroborated by documents.
Examination of Freycinet's statement.
The impossibility of doing what Peron and Freycinet asserted was done.

One statement made by Captain Baudin to Flinders has been reserved for separate treatment, because it merits careful examination.* (* The more so as the conflict of evidence to be pointed out seems to have escaped the notice of writers on Australian history. The contradictions are not observed in Bonwick's Port Phillip Settlement, in Rusden's Discovery, Survey, and Settlement of Port Phillip, in Shillinglaw's Historical Records of Port Phillip, in Labilliere's Early History of Victoria, in Mr. Gyles Turner's History of the Colony of Victoria, nor in any other work with which the author is acquainted.)

He gave an account of the storm in Bass Strait which had separated him from Le Naturaliste on March 21, and went on to say that "having since had fair winds and fine weather, he had explored the south coast from Westernport to our place of meeting without finding any river, inlet, or other shelter which afforded anchorage." In his report to the Admiralty, dated May 11, 1802, Flinders related what Baudin told him on this point, in the following terms, which it is worth while to compare with those used by him in his book, quoted above: "Captain Baudin informed me that after parting with the Naturaliste in the Strait, in a heavy gale, he had had fine weather, and had kept the coast close on board from Westernport to the place of meeting, but that he had found no bay or place where a vessel could anchor, the coast having but few bights in it, and those affording nothing to interest." It will be seen that the official report and the account given to the public twelve years later are in close agreement. The important fact to be noticed is that Le Geographe had slipped past Port Phillip without observing the entrance, and that her captain was at this time entirely ignorant of the existence of the harbour which has since become the seat of one of the greatest cities in the southern hemisphere.

Now this statement, which is sufficiently surprising without the introduction of complicating contradictions, becomes quite mysterious when compared with the accounts given by Lieutenant Louis de Freycinet and Francois Peron, the joint authors of the official history of the French voyage. It is astonishing in itself, because a vessel sent out on a voyage of exploration would not be expected to overlook so important a feature as Port Phillip. Here was not a small river with a sandbar over its mouth, but an extensive area of land-locked sea, with an opening a mile and a half wide, flanked by rocky head-lands, fronted by usually turbulent waters, at the head of a deep indentation of the coast. The entrance to Port Phillip is not, it must be acknowledged, so easy to perceive from the outside as would appear from a hasty examination of the map. If the reader will take a good atlas in which there is a map of Port Phillip, and will hold the plate in a horizontal position sufficiently below the level of the eye to permit the entrance to be seen ALONG the page, he will look at it very much as it is regarded from a ship at sea.* (* A reduced copy of the Admiralty chart of the entrance (1907) is prefixed to this chapter. The reader can perform the experiment with that.) It will be noticed that a clear view into the port, except from a particular angle, is blocked by the land on the eastern side (Point Nepean) overlapping the tongue of land just inside the port on the western side (Shortland's Bluff). Not until a vessel stands fairly close and opposite to the entrance, so that the two lighthouses on the western side, at Queenscliff, "open out," can the passage be discerned.* (* Ferguson, Sailing Directions for Port Phillip, 1854--he was harbour-master at the time--says (page 9): "Vessels having passed Cape Schanck should keep a good offing in running down towards the entrance until they open out the lighthouses, WHICH ARE NOT SEEN BEFORE BEARING NORTH 1/2 EAST OWING TO THE HIGH LAND OF POINT NEPEAN INTERVENING." Findley, Navigation of the South Pacific Ocean, 1863, has a remark about the approach to the port from the west: "In approaching Port Phillip from the westward, the entrance cannot be distinguished until Nepean Point, the eastern point, bears north-north-east, when Shortland's Bluff, on which the lighthouses are erected, opens out, and a view of the estuary is obtained." A Treatise on the Navigation of Port Phillip, by Captain Evans (a pilot of thirty-six years' experience), has also been consulted.) Indeed, a pilot of much experience has assured the writer that ships, whose captains know the port, are sometimes seen "dodging about" (the phrase is the pilot's) looking for the entrance. Yet it may be allowed that if Le Geographe had sailed close in, with the shore on her starboard quarter, and the coast had been examined with care, she would hardly have missed the port; and, her special business being exploration, she certainly ought not to have missed it.* (* In Appendix B, at the end of this chapter, are given quotations from the journals of Murray and Flinders, in which they record how they first saw the port.)

But although Baudin said he had seen nothing "to interest," both Peron and Freycinet, in their volumes--published years later, after they had learnt of the discovery of Port Phillip by Lieutenant John Murray in January 1802--stated that it was seen from Le Geographe on March 30. Peron wrote that shortly after daybreak, the ship being in the curve of the coast called Baie Talleyrand on the Terre Napoleon maps--that is,

between Cape Schanck on the eastern side of Port Phillip heads, and Cape Roadknight on the western side--the port was seen and its contours were distinguished from the masthead.* (* The matter is sufficiently important to justify the quotation of the passages in which Peron and Freycinet recorded the alleged observation, and these are given at length in Appendix A to this chapter.) Peron did not say that he saw it himself. He merely recorded that it was seen. Freycinet did not see it himself either. He was at this time an officer on Le Naturaliste, and was not on the Terre Napoleon coasts at all until the following year, when he penetrated St. Vincent's and Spencer's Gulfs. He, without indicating the time of day, or stating that the port was merely viewed from aloft, asserted that the entrance was observed, though the ship did not go inside.

In the first place, the statements of Peron and Freycinet are not in agreement. To observe the entrance was one thing; to trace the contours from the masthead quite another. To do the first was quite possible, though not, as will be shown, from any part of the route indicated on the track-chart of Le Geographe. But to distinguish the contours of Port Phillip from outside, over the peninsula, was not possible.

Here, at all events, is a sharp conflict of evidence. We must endeavour to elicit the truth.

It is certain that Baudin had no motive for concealing his knowledge, if he knew of the existence of Port Phillip when he met Flinders. Had his cue been to prefer claims on account of priority of discovery, he would have been disposed to make his title clear forthwith. Frankness, too, was an engaging characteristic of Baudin throughout. He was evidently proud of what his expedition had already done, and was, as Flinders wrote, "communicative." Had he discovered a new harbour, he would have spoken about it jubilantly. Moreover, as Flinders explained to him how he could obtain fresh water at Port Lincoln, a fellow-navigator would surely have been glad to reciprocate by indicating the whereabouts of a harbour in which the Investigator might possibly be glad to take shelter on her eastern course.

It is also clear that Flinders did not misunderstand Baudin. He was an extremely exact man, and as he said that he was "particular in detailing all that passed," we may take it that one with whom precision was something like a passion would be careful not to misunderstand on so important a point. Brown, too, was with him, a trained man of science, who would have been quick to correct his chief in the event of a misapprehension. Flinders so far relied on Baudin's statement that when, on April 26, he sighted Port Phillip heads himself, he thought he was off Westernport, which his friend George Bass had discovered in 1798. "It was the information of Captain Baudin which induced this supposition," he wrote.* (* See also the entry in his journal, Appendix B.) It was not till he bore up and took his bearings that he saw that he could not be at Westernport; and he then congratulated himself on having made "a new and useful discovery"--unaware, of course, that Murray had found Port Phillip in the Lady Nelson in the previous January.

It must be noted in addition that Baudin wrote a letter to Jussieu, the distinguished French botanist and member of the Institute, nine months later, in which he gave an account of his voyage up to date.* (* Printed in the Moniteur, 22 Fructidor, Revolutionary Year 11. (September 9, 1803).) Therein he said not a word about seeing Port Phillip, nor did he allude to the possibility of there being a harbour between Westernport and Encounter Bay.

Baudin, then, knew nothing about Port Phillip when he met Flinders on April 8. But if somebody else saw it from the masthead on March 30, why was not the fact reported to the commander? Why was he not asked the question whether so large a bay should be explored? Again, if Le Geographe did sight Port Phillip, why did she not enter it? Here was a magnificent chance for discoverers. They were necessarily unaware of Murray's good fortune in January. As far as their knowledge could have gone, the port was absolutely new to geography. If we believe Peron and Freycinet, surely these were the most negligent explorers who ever sailed the seas.* (* It is true that Cook did not enter Port Jackson when he discovered and named it on May 6, 1770. But exploration, it must always be remembered, was not the primary object of the voyage of the Endeavour, as it was of Le Geographe. Cook, when he achieved the greatest extent of maritime discovery made at one time by any navigator in history, was simply on his way homeward from a visit to Tahiti, the primary purpose of which was to enable astronomers to observe the transit of Venus. Cook, too, made a record of the latitude and longitude of Port Jackson. No such entry was made by the French relative to Port Phillip, as will presently be shown.) But if we believe that Baudin spoke the truth to Flinders--and the absence of all reference to the port in his letter to Jussieu is alone sufficient to show that he did--what shall we say of the statements of Peron and Freycinet, written after Baudin's death, after they had learnt of Murray's discovery, and when they had set themselves the task of making the work of the expedition appear as important as possible?

Now, Baudin's statement is confirmed by five documents, the testimony of which is convincing.

1. As an appendix to volume 3 of the Voyage de Decouvertes aux Terres Australes, is printed the entire log of Le Geographe. The entry for March 30, 1802* (* Page 499.) (9th Germinal, Year 10 in the revolutionary calendar, which is printed parallel with the ordinary dates), is latitude 38 degrees 33 minutes south, longitude 142 degrees 16 minutes east. The reckoning is from the meridian of Paris, not of Greenwich.) The situation when the entry was made, presumably at noon, was about midway between Lorne and Apollo Bay, off the coast leading down in a south-westerly direction to Cape Otway. The winds were east, east-north-east, south-east, and east-south-east; weather very fine; a fresh wind blowing ("joli frais; beau temps"). It was the wind which was hindering Flinders, sailing in the opposite direction. The column for "Remarques" opposite this date was left blank. In other places where anything remarkable was seen--even such a thing as a striking sunset--it was duly entered in the proper place. But there was no entry relative to seeing Port Phillip from the masthead, or observing the entrance, at any time. Baudin is corroborated by the ship's log.

2. There is also appended to volume 3 of the same work a table of geographical positions as calculated by the ship's officers. The situation of Cape Schanck (Cap Richelieu on the French map) and of Ile des Anglois (Phillip Island) are given; and next in the list comes Cap Desaix (Cape Otway).* (* Page 544.) There is no record of a latitudinal and longitudinal reading between these points. That is to say, the position of Port Phillip is not indicated at all. In this case also the column for "Remarques" is blank. Can we believe that if the port had been observed, no attempt would have been made to fix the situation of it? The latitudes and longitudes of some quite unimportant features of the coast were duly noted. Here was a large bay, and not the slightest reference was made to it in the table. The inevitable inference is that the French saw nothing worth recording between Cape Schanck and Cape Otway. Baudin is corroborated by the table of "positions geographiques."

3. The atlas issued with the first volume of the Voyage de Decouvertes in 1807 contained several coloured plates of views of coasts traversed by Le Geographe. The work of the artists accompanying the expedition was very beautiful; some of the plates have rarely been excelled in atlases of this kind. These coast sketches, like narrow ribbons, prettily tinted, were done from the deck of the ship, and represented the aspect of the shore-line from seaward. The coasts of Bass Strait were duly represented, but there was a gap between the Schanck and the Otway sides of Port Phillip. Why? Obviously because the ship was not near enough to the coast to enable the artists to see it clearly. Can we believe that men whose particular task it was to depict the coasts traversed, would have missed the picturesque gateway of Port Phillip if they had seen it? Baudin is corroborated by the atlas.

4. The Moniteur of July 2, 1808, contained a long article by Lieutenant Henri de Freycinet--elder brother of Louis--reviewing the work of the expedition, on the occasion of the publication of Peron's first volume. Now, Henri de Freycinet was Baudin's first lieutenant on Le Geographe. If Port Phillip was seen from that ship on March 30, he should have seen it if Baudin did not. If the captain was ill, or asleep, Henri de Freycinet would be in charge. But in his article, though he described the discoveries claimed to have been made with particular regard to the so-called Terre Napoleon coasts, he made no reference to Port Phillip. Baudin is corroborated by his chief officer.

5. Lastly, when Captain Hamelin returned to Europe with Le Naturaliste in 1803, Bonaparte's official organ, the Moniteur, published an article on the voyage from information supplied partly by him and partly contained in despatches.* (* Moniteur, 27 Thermidor, Revolutionary Year 11 (August 15, 1803).) Referring to Baudin's voyage along the "entierement inconnues" southern coasts of Australia, the article said that he first visited Wilson's Promontory (which it called Cap Wilson), and then advanced along the coast till he met Captain Flinders. No reference was made to seeing any port, although if one had been seen by any one on board Le Geographe, it surely would have been mentioned with some amount of pride in an official despatch.

As has already been said, Freycinet was not with Le Geographe on this voyage, and therefore knew nothing about it personally. But before the publication of the official history was completed, Peron died. Baudin was also dead. Freycinet, who was preparing the maps, was instructed to finish the work. He therefore wrote up from the notes and diaries of other members of the expedition a geographical description of the coasts traversed. His general plan, when describing coasts with which he had no personal acquaintance, was to acknowledge in footnotes the particular persons on whose notes he relied for his descriptions. But it is a singular circumstance that when he came to describe this part of the coast of Terre Napoleon, and to repeat, with an addition, Peron's statement that Port Phillip was seen on March 30, he gave no footnote or reference. In whose diary or notes was that fact recorded? It was not in the ship's log, as we have seen. Who, then, saw Port Phillip from Le Geographe? Henri de Freycinet did not; Baudin did not; Peron did not; Louis de Freycinet was not there. If it were seen by a look-out man, did no officer, or scientist, or artist on board, take the trouble to look at it, or to make a note about it, or a drawing of it? What singular explorers these were!

We must examine Freycinet's story a little more closely. He is not content with saying, as Peron had done, that the port was seen from the masthead. He is more precise--he, the man who was not there. He says: "Nous en avons observe l'entree." That is more than Peron, who was there, had claimed. If the "entrance" to Port Phillip was "observed" on March 30, still more incomprehensible is it that the ship did not enter, that the fact was not mentioned in the log, that the latitude and longitude were not taken, and that the artists neglected so excellent an opportunity.

But that is not all. Freycinet, the man who was not there, and whose narrative was not published till thirteen years after the voyage, has further information to give us. He states, on whose authority we are not told, that the country observed along part of this coast, between Cap Suffren and Cap Marengo (that is, between Cape Patton and Cape Franklin), presented "un aspect riant et fertile." The book containing these descriptive words was, the reader will recollect, published in 1815. Now, Flinders' volumes, A Voyage to Terra Australis, were published in 1814. There he had described the country which he saw from inside the port as presenting "a pleasing and in many places a fertile appearance." "Un aspect riant et fertile" and "a pleasing and fertile appearance" are identical terms. It may be a mere coincidence, though the comparison of dates is a little startling. All the words which one can use are, as Boileau said, "in the dictionaries"; every writer selects and arranges them to suit his own ideas. But when Flinders said that the country around Port Phillip looked "pleasing and fertile," he had seen it to advantage. On May 1 he had climbed Station Peak, one of the You-Yang group of mountains, and saw stretched at his feet the rich Werribee Plains, the broad miles of fat pastures leading away to Mount Macedon, and the green rolling lands beyond Geelong, opening to the Victorian Western District. In May the kangaroo-grass would be high and waving, full of seed, a wealth of luxuriant herbage, the value of which Flinders, a country-bred boy, would be quick to appreciate. On the other side of

the bay he had climbed Arthur's Seat at the back of Dromana, saw behind him the waters of Westernport which Bass had discovered, and traced the curve of the coast as far into the blue distance as his eye could penetrate. He had warrant for saying that the country looked "pleasing and fertile." But how did Freycinet come to select those words, "un aspect riant et fertile"? He was not there himself, and, as a matter of probability, it seems most unlikely that such terms would occur to a person who was there, either as applicable to the lands near Points Nepean and Lonsdale, with their bastions of rock and ramparts of sand, or to the scrubby and broken coast running down to Cape Otway, which, as a matter of fact, is not fertile, except in little patches, and, even after half a century of settlement, does not look as if it were. The conclusion is hardly to be resisted that Freycinet thought he was safe in appropriating, to describe land seen from seaward, terms which Flinders had employed to describe land seen inside the port.

Three additional facts strengthen the conviction that Port Phillip was never seen from Le Geographe, but that the statements of Peron and Freycinet were made to cover up a piece of negligence in the exploration of these coasts. The French, on their maps, lavishly bestowed names on the capes, bays, and other features of the coasts seen by them. More will be said on this subject in the next chapter. But meanwhile it is important to notice that they gave no names to the headlands at the entrance to Port Phillip, which are now known as Point Lonsdale and Point Nepean. If they saw the entrance on March 30, why did they lose the opportunity of honouring two more of their distinguished countrymen, as they had done in naming Cap Richelieu (Schanck), Cap Desaix (Otway), Cap Montaigne (Nelson), Cap Volney (Moonlight Head), and so many other features of the coast? It is singular that while they named some capes that do not exist--as, for instance, Cap Montesquieu, to which there is no name on modern maps to correspond, and no projection from the coast to which it can be applicable--they left nameless these sharp and prominent tongues of rock which form the gateway of Port Phillip. But if they knew nothing about the port until they learnt of its existence later at Sydney, and saw no chart of it till an English chart was brought to their notice, the omission is comprehensible.

Another fact which must not escape notice is that the French charts show two lines of soundings, one along the inside of the Nepean peninsula, and a shorter one towards the north. Mud Island is also indicated. How did they get there? It was not even pretended in the history of the voyage that Le Geographe went inside the heads. But see how the story grew: (a) Baudin saw no port; (b) Peron says the port was seen from the masthead; (c) Freycinet says the entrance was seen; (d) on the charts there are actually soundings shown inside the harbour. Further consideration will be given to these soundings in a later chapter.

The reader who has carefully followed the argument so far, will probably have come to the conclusion that Captain Baudin's statement to Flinders was perfectly true, and that the assertions of Peron and Freycinet which, if veracious, would make Le Geographe the second ship that ever saw Port Phillip--cannot be accepted. One other fact will clinch the case and place the conclusion beyond doubt.

In 1812 Freycinet published a large folio volume of charts. The sixth chart in the book is most valuable for our purpose. It is called a "Carte generale du Detroit de Bass." Its importance lies in the fact that by means of a dotted line it marks the track of Le Geographe throughout her course. Now, this track-chart shows clearly that the ship was never, at any moment, nearer than six or seven miles to Port Phillip heads. On the greater part of her course across the so-called Baie Talleyrand she was much farther from the land than that. On no part of her course would it have been possible for a person at the masthead to see either the entrance to Port Phillip or any part of the port itself. It shows that the ship, while steering across from Cape Schanck in the direction of Cape Otway, diverted a few miles to the north-west, and then abruptly turned south-west. From any part of this course, the stretch of coast where Port Phillip heads are would present the appearance of an unbroken wall of rock, the gap being covered by the overlapping land on the western side. The sudden north-westerly diversion, and then the sharp turn south-west, seem to indicate that Baudin thought it well to sail up to see if there was anything worth examining at the head of the bight, and concluded that there was not.

There can be no more authoritative opinion on the possibility of doing what Peron and Freycinet claimed was done, than that of a member of the Port Phillip pilot service. The pilot steamer is almost incessantly on duty in what the French chose to call Baie Talleyrand. The pilots know the ground intimately; they are familiar with every part of the coast; they see it in all weathers; they observe the entrance under all conditions of light and atmosphere. Wishing, therefore, to confirm an opinion already adequately supported, the writer showed two large photographed copies of two of Freycinet’s charts to an experienced member of the pilot service, and asked him whether it would have been possible for Port Phillip to be seen from the situation indicated, or anywhere in the vicinity, under any conceivable conditions. He at once replied that it was utterly impossible.* (* Indeed, he promptly said, in the direct, emphatic speech which is the special privilege of sailors: "The man who said he saw Port Phillip or the entrance from any point in that neighbourhood would be lying.") Even if Le Geographe had sailed close along shore, he further observed, nothing like the contour of the port shown on Freycinet’s chart could have been drawn from the masthead; and the track-chart shows that the ship’s course was several miles from the coast. In fact, the chart shows more than could have been seen if the French had sailed close up to the heads and looked inside.

Peron’s statement--which is not confirmed by Freycinet--that it had at first been determined to call the port "Port du Debut,"* (* See Appendix A to this chapter.) is also rather puzzling. "Du Debut" of what? The eastern extremity of the region marked "Terre Napoleon" on Freycinet’s charts is Wilson’s Promontory, and the real "Port Du Debut" of the territory so designated would be, if there is any relation between words and things, not Port Phillip but Westernport.* (* In the Moniteur article of 27th Thermidor, Revolutionary Year 11, Wilson’s Promontory is referred to as the point of departure: "Il visita d’abord le cap Wilson, d’ou il prit son point de depart, et s’avanca vers l’ouest en suivant la cote

jusqu'a la distance de 15 degres de longitude.") Was there some confusion in Peron's mind as to what port was seen? Unquestionably Le Geographe did sight Westernport. Was it originally Baudin's intention to ignore Bass's discovery of 1798, and, giving a French name to every feature of the coast in Terre Napoleon, to call Westernport "Port du Debut"? That would not have been an appropriate name for Port Phillip had it really been seen on the morning of March 30, as it most certainly was not. But, it being determined to denominate the land between Wilson's Promontory and Cape Adieu "Terre Napoleon," Westernport might well have been counted as the port of the beginning of the exploration of the territory, and, as such, it would truly have been the Port du Debut. Freycinet, writing in 1824, acknowledged that Peron, "having written before the charts were finished, made some mistakes relative to geography."* (* Preface to the second edition of the Voyage de Decouvertes (1824) 1 page 16.) It is possible that this was one of his errors; and it would be an easy one for a man to make who was not familiar with the coast. But assuredly there was no mere error on Freycinet's part.

What, then, are we to make of the statements of Peron and Freycinet?

The latter officer tells us, in one of his prefaces, that the French Government was dissatisfied with the work of the expedition, and was at first disposed to refuse to publish any record of it. Sir Joseph Banks, closely in touch with movements relative to scientific work, had news of the displeasure of Napoleon's ministers, and wrote to Flinders, then a prisoner: "M. Baudin's voyage has not been published. I do not hear that his countrymen are well satisfied with his proceedings" (June 1805). Finally it was determined to issue a history of the expedition; but to have published any charts without showing Port Phillip would have been to make failure look ridiculous. By this time Freycinet, who was preparing the charts, knew of the existence of the port. The facts drive to the conclusion that the French had no drawing of Port Phillip of their own whatever, but that their representation of it was copied from a drawing of which possession had been acquired--how? It is quite clear that Freycinet had to patch up the omissions in the work of his companions from some source, to hide the negligent exploration which had missed one of the two most important harbours in Australia. We shall hereafter see how he did it.

APPENDIX A.

The following are the two passages from Peron and Freycinet to which reference is made in the text. Peron wrote (Voyage de Decouvertes 1 316): "Le 30 mars, a la pointe du jour, nous portames sur la terre, que nous atteignimes bientot. Un grand cap, qui fut appele Cap Richelieu [it is now Cape Schanck] se projette en avant, et forme l'entree d'une baie profonde, que nous nommames Baie Talleyrand. Sur la cote orientale de cette baie, et presque vers son fond, se trouve un port, dont on distinguoit assez bien les contours du haut des mats; nous le designames sous le nom de Port du Debut; mais ayant appris dans la suite qu'il avoit ete reconnu plus en detail par le brick Anglois The Lady Nelson, et qu'il avoit ete nomme Port Philipp [sic] nous lui conserverons avec d'autant plus de plaisir ce dernier nom, qu'il rappelle celui du fondateur d'une

colonie dans laquelle nous avons trouve des secours si genereux et si puissans."

Freycinet wrote (Voyage de Decouvertes 3 115): "Nous venons de vanter la beaute du port Western; mais celui que l'on rencontre a peu de distance vers l'O ne paroit pas moins recommandable, tant par son etendue que par commodite. Nous en avons observe l'entree le 30 mars 1802, sans toutefois penetrer dans son interieur. Les Anglois, qui l'ont examine avec details, lui ont donne le nom de Port Phillip en l'honneur du premier gouverneur de la colonie du Port Jackson...Vers l'interieur on voit de hautes montagnes; elles se rapprochent du rivage a la hauteur du Cap Suffren; et de ce point jusqu'au cap Marengo, la cote, plus elevee encore, est d'un aspect riant et fertile."

APPENDIX B.

The reader may find it convenient to have appended also, the passages from the journals of Murray and Flinders, in which they record their first view of Port Phillip. These journals were used by Labilliere in writing his Early History of Victoria (1 78 and 110). Murray's was then at the Admiralty; it is now in the Public Record Office. That of Flinders was placed at the disposal of Labilliere by the distinguished grandson of the explorer, Professor Flinders Petrie, whose great work in revealing to us moderns an ampler knowledge of the oldest civilisations, those of Syria and Egypt, is not a little due, one thinks, to capacity inherited from him who revealed so much of the lands on which the newest of civilisations, that of Australia, is implanted.

Murray, in the Lady Nelson, sailing close along-shore west from Westernport on January 5, 1802, saw a headland bearing west-north-west distant about twelve miles, and an opening in the land that had the appearance of a harbour north-west ten or twelve miles. When within a mile and a half, he wrote: "With closer examination of my own, and going often to the masthead, I saw that the reef did nearly stretch across the whole way, but inside saw a fine sheet of smooth water of great extent. From the wind blowing on this shore, and fresh, I was obliged to haul off under a press of sail to clear the land, but with a determination to overhaul it by and by, as no doubt it has a channel into it, and is apparently a fine harbour of large extent." Murray did not enter the port until after his mate, Bowen, had found the way in, with a boat, in February.

Flinders, after visiting King Island, resumed his work along the mainland on April 25. He wrote in his journal: "Until noon no idea was entertained of any opening existing in this bight; but at that time an opening became more and more conspicuous as we ran farther west, and high land at the back appeared to be at a considerable distance. Still, however, I entertained but little hopes of finding a passage sufficiently deep for a ship, and the bearings of the entrance prevented me from thinking it the west entrance into Westernport." In the journal, as in the report to the Admiralty, and, twelve years later, in his book, Flinders wrote that it was what Baudin told him that made him think there could be no port in the neighbourhood. "From appearances I at first judged this port to be

Westernport, although many others did not answer; though Captain Baudin had met with no harbour after leaving that, and from his account he had fine weather and kept the shore close on board to the time of his meeting us."

CHAPTER 4. TERRE NAPOLEON AND ITS NOMENCLATURE.

Imprisonment of Flinders in Mauritius.
The French atlas of 1807.
The French charts and the names upon them.
Hurried publication.
The allegation that Peron acted under pressure.
Freycinet's explanations.
His failure to meet the gravest charge.
Extent of the actual discoveries of Baudin, and nature of the country discovered.
The French names in current use on the so-called Terre Napoleon coasts.
Difficulty of identifying features to which Baudin applied names.
Freycinet's perplexities.
The new atlas of 1817.

What happened to Matthew Flinders when, after a brief sojourn in Sydney Harbour, he left to continue his explorations in the northern waters of Australia, is generally known. While he was at work in the Gulf of Carpentaria, the condition of the Investigator caused him much uneasiness, and when she was overhauled, the rotten state of her timbers compelled him to return. She was then condemned as unseaworthy. On again sailing north in the Porpoise, he was wrecked on the Barrier Reef. Making his way back to Sydney in a small open boat built from the wreckage, and well named the Hope, he was given the use of the Cumberland, a mere barge of only twenty-nine tons, in which to carry himself and part of his shipwrecked company to England. Compelled by the leaky condition of the crazy little craft, and the inefficiency of the pumps, to put into Mauritius, then a French possession, he was detained as a prisoner by the French governor, General Decaen, for six and a half years.

There is no need, for our immediate purpose, to linger over these occurrences, inviting as they are, with a glint of Stevensonian romance in the bare facts, and all the pathos that attaches to the case of a brave and blameless man thwarted and ruined by perversity and malignity. Frequently have the facts been wrongly written, as for instance when Blair states, in his Cyclopaedia of Australia, that Baudin in Le Geographe called at Mauritius after Flinders was imprisoned, and, instead of procuring his release, "persuaded the Governor to confine him more rigorously." Poor Baudin--he had been in his grave three months when Flinders appeared at the island in dire distress, and Le Geographe itself left the day before his arrival.

What is clear, however, is that Flinders was detained in a captivity that broke down his health and wrecked his useful life, first on General Decaen's own responsibility, and later--though the evidence on this point is not specific--in accordance with influences from Paris; and that

during his imprisonment an attempt was made to deprive him of credit for his discoveries by the publication of the first volume of the French official history and its accompanying atlas.

The atlas published in 1807* (* The date on the imprint of volume 1, though the charts bear the date 1808. A second part of the atlas, containing a few additional small charts, was issued in 1811.) contained two large charts, the work of Lieutenant Louis de Freycinet. The first was a "Carte generale de la Nouvelle Hollande," with the title inscribed upon a scroll clutched in the talons of an imperial eagle, a most fearsome wild-fowl, that with aggressive beak and flaming eye seemed to assert a claim to the regions denominated on what it held. This was the most complete map of Australia published up to the date named. The second was entitled "Carte generale de la Terre Napoleon." In this case the title was held by feathered Mercury in graceful flight, displaying the motto "Orbis Australis dulces exuviae." An exquisite little vignette under the title (by Lesueur) should not escape notice. Upon both charts, the whole of southern Australia, from Wilson's Promontory to Cape Adieu in the Bight, was styled Terre Napoleon. To nearly every cape, bay, island, peninsula, strait, and gulf in this extensive region was affixed a name, in most cases, though not in all, that of some Frenchman of eminence during the revolutionary and Napoleonic period. The Spencer's Gulf and St. Vincent's Gulf, which Flinders had discovered, were respectively named Golfe Bonaparte and Golfe Josephine.* (* The latter was named "in honour of our august Empress," said Peron. It was a pretty piece of courtiership; but unfortunately Napoleon's nuptial arrangements were in a state of flux, and when the trenchant Quarterly reviewer of 1810 came to discuss the work, the place of Josephine was occupied by Marie Louise. The reviewer saucily suggested: "Bonaparte has since changed it for Louisa's Gulf.") The large island which Flinders had pointed out to Baudin, and which he informed that officer he had named Kangaroo Island, became Ile Decres. The Yorke's Peninsula of Flinders was styled Presqu'Ile Cambaceres; his Investigator Strait became Detroit de Lacepede; and his Backstairs Passage, Detroit de Colbert. To-day the Terre Napoleon charts look like a partial index to the Pantheon and Pere Lachaise. Laplace, Buffon, Volney, Maupertuis, Montaigne, Lannes, Pascal, Talleyrand, Berthier, Lafayette, Descartes, Racine, Moliere, Bernadotte, Lafontein, Condillac, Bossuet, Colbert, Rabelais, D'Alembert, Sully, Bayard, Fenelon, Voltaire,* (* Voltaire's name is on the Terre Napoleon sectional chart, but it seems to have been crowded out of the large Carte Generale. As there is no actual bay in Spencer's Gulf to correspond with the Baie Voltaire shown on the Terre Napoleon chart, the omission does not matter much. But one would have liked to have Voltaire's opinion on the subject of his exclusion.) Jeanne d'Arc, L'Hopital, Massena, Turenne, Jussieu, Murat--soldiers, statesmen, scientists, authors, philosophers, adorn with their memorable names these most un-Gallic shores. The Bonaparte family was pleasantly provided for. Thus we find the Isles Jerome, Baie Louis and Baie Hortense (after Josephine's daughter). Outside the Terre Napoleon region, on the north coast, the name Golfe Joseph Bonaparte bespoke geographical immortality for another member of the family. But we miss Rousseau and Turgot, deplore the absence of Corneille and La Bruyere, and feel that at least a sand-bank or two might have been found for Quesnay and the economists, if only as a set-off

against the disparagement of Burke.

Yet it is on the whole an illustrious company, representative of the best and brightest in French intellect and character. When the brave old Spanish navigators of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries discovered a new port or cape, they commonly gave it the name of the saint on whose day in the calendar it was found; and the map of Central and South America is a memorial at once of their piety and their enterprise. But Baudin's expedition having no such guide--Comte's Positivist Calendar, if not of later date, would have been useful--their selection of names was quite an original effort. Unfortunately, the "discoveries" to which the names were applied were not original.

Two facts are incontrovertible: (1) that Flinders had discovered and charted the whole of the south coast of Australia from Fowler Bay to Encounter Bay--except the south of Kangaroo Island, which is represented by a dotted line on his charts--before he met Le Geographe on April 8, 1802; and (2) that the French officers knew that he had done so. Flinders explained to Baudin the discoveries which he had made when they met in Encounter Bay, and afterwards when the Investigator and the French ships lay together in Port Jackson he showed him one of his finished charts to illustrate what he had done. "So far from any prior title being set up at that time to Kangaroo Island and the parts westward," wrote Flinders, "the officers of the Geographe always spoke of them as belonging to the Investigator."

The French names would appear to have been applied by Baudin, if Freycinet is to be believed; for he uses the phrase "les nommes que Baudin a donnes."* (* Voyage de Decouvertes 2 Preface page 23.) But when Freycinet wrote those words Baudin was dead, and the publication of the charts had evoked much indignation on account of the gross wrong done to Flinders. In one or two cases the names were certainly not Baudin's, as will be made clear in a later chapter.* (* Take, for instance, Ile Decres, the name given to Kangaroo Island. Decres did not become Minister for the Navy till October 3, 1801. Baudin was then at sea, and probably never knew anything about Decres' accession to office. It is pretty well certain that the name was not given to the island until after the return of the expedition, when Baudin was dead.) Certainly Baudin was in no sense responsible for the publication. Peron and Freycinet were the men who put their names to the charts and volumes; and they were by no means exculpated by the suggestion that Baudin devised a nomenclature calculated to deprive Flinders of the credit that he had won. Both Peron and Freycinet knew, too, when they issued their volume and atlas, that Flinders was being held in captivity in Mauritius; and the dead captain was certainly not guilty of the meanness and mendacity of hurrying forward the issue of books that pretended to discoveries never made, while the real discoverer was prevented from asserting his own rightful claims.

That the publication was hurried forward as soon as Napoleon's government gave the order to print, is evident from the incompleteness of the atlas of 1807. It contained a table of charts--"Tableau General des planches qui composent l'atlas historique"--which were not inserted in the book;

and in one of the four copies of this rare volume which the author has been able to examine, the previous owner, or the bookseller from whom it was purchased, collating the contents with the table, had pencilled in the margin, "All wanting," being under the impression that the copy was imperfect. But the charts detailed in the table were not issued with the book. They were not ready, and the table stands as an eloquent indicator of the hurry in which the publication was performed. The first volume of the Voyage de Decouvertes contains numerous marginal references to charts not contained in the atlas issued with it. Readers of the book must have been puzzled by these references,* (* As the present writer was when he began to study the subject closely, and as the Quarterly reviewer was in 1810. He said: "The atlas is of quarto size; it contains not a single chart nor any sketch or plan of a coast, island, bay, or harbour, though frequent references are made to such in the margin of the printed volume" (page 60). The reviewer should have said, "except the two cartes generales" described on a previous page.) when they turned to the atlas and found no charts corresponding with them. Freycinet's complete folio volume of charts was not published till 1812, five years after the issue of the book which they were necessary to explain. Flinders had then been released; but it is significant that he was held in the clutches of General Decaen, despite constant demands for his liberation, until the preparation of the French charts was sufficiently advanced to make it impossible for his own to be issued until theirs had been placed before the world.

Flinders, generous in his judgments of other men even when smarting under great grievances, put forth an excuse for Peron, suggesting that he had acted under pressure. "How, then, came M. Peron to advance what was so contrary to truth?" he wrote. "Was he a man destitute of all principle? My answer is, that I believe his candour to have been equal to his acknowledged abilities, and that what he wrote was from overruling authority, and smote him to the heart. He did not live to finish the second volume."

This would be an acceptable way of disposing of the question if we could reasonably accept the explanation. But can we? Freycinet denied that any pressure was exerted. Those who knew Peron's character, he wrote,* (* Voyage de Decouvertes 2 page 21.) were aware that he would have refused to do anything with which his conscience could reproach him. He was so able and zealous a man of science, that we should like to believe that of him. justice demands that we should give full weight to every favourable factor in the case as affecting him. Flinders was a British naval officer, and naval men at that period were disposed to see the hand of Napoleon in every bit of mischief. But the "pressure" theory does not sustain examination.

The task thrust upon Peron in the writing of the historical narrative of the voyage was one for which he had not prepared himself, and which did not properly pertain to him. The death of Baudin, whose work this would naturally have been, compelled the naturalist to become historian. He had not kept the log, and it may be reasonably assumed that he had not concerned himself in a particular degree with those events of which he would have made careful notes had it been intended from the beginning

that he should be the official recorder. He had applied himself with passionate energy to the collection and classification of zoological specimens. This was his special vocation, and he pursued it worthily. It is probably safe to say that no expedition, French or English, that ever came down to Australasian waters, added so much that was new to the world's scientific knowledge, or accumulated so much material, as did this one whose chief naturalist was Francois Peron. When it is added that two of the greatest figures in British scientific history, Darwin and Huxley, were among the workers in this fruitful field, it will be admitted that the acknowledgment is not made in any niggard spirit. But we are now concerned with Peron as historian of what related to Terre Naploeon and the surrounding circumstances. Here his statements have been shown to be unreliable. It is probable that he wrote largely from memory; almost certainly from insufficient data. Further, he was weak and ill when engaged upon the book. The hardships and unhealthy conditions of the voyage had undermined his constitution. One would conclude from his style of writing that he was by temperament excitable and easily subject to depression. A zealous savant, to whom fishes and birds, beetles and butterflies, were the precious things of the earth, and for whom the discovery of a new species was as great a source of joy as a glorious victory was to his imperial master, Peron appeals to us as a pathetic figure whom one would rather screen from blame than otherwise. He suffered severely, and did his final work under the difficulty of breaking health. He died in 1810, before his second volume was ready for publication.

Freycinet wrote a series of notes by way of preface to volumes 2 and 3, in attempted justification of the Terre Napoleon maps.* (* The second volume of the Voyage de Decouvertes was published--out of its due order--in 1816, the third in 1815.) He was put on the defensive because "the audacious attempt which was made in the first volume of this work, to rob Captain Flinders of the well-earned merit of his nautical labours and discoveries, while he was basely and barbarously kept in prison in a French colony, was regarded with becoming indignation throughout Europe, and with shame by the better part of the French nation."* (* Quarterly Review volume 17 (1817) page 229.) That that is a fair description of the state of feeling among people concerned with the advancement of knowledge, is beyond question; and the French above all, with their love of enterprise, their sentiment of honour, their eager applause of high achievement, their chivalrous sense of justice, and their quick sympathy with suffering wrongly inflicted and bravely borne, would have no taste for laurels plucked in their name from the brow of him who was entitled to wear them. Thoroughly repugnant to French intellect and feeling was conduct of this description. National animosities were more bitter at this period than they have ever been at any other time, but science knows no nationality. Even when the two governments had ceased to have relations with each other, we still find English and French men of science communicating on friendly terms; and Napoleon himself was willing to grant the requests of an English savant while English arms and English diplomacy were at furious war with him. Thus Sir Joseph Banks, who was a corresponding member of the Institute of France, could write in 1805, "I have obtained the release of five persons from the gracious condescension of the Emperor, the only five, I believe, that have been regularly

discharged from their parole."

Freycinet, then, had to defend his charts. But there never was a more complete example of the remark that "qui s'excuse s'accuse." He argued that when Le Geographe cruised along the coasts discovered by Flinders, there was no published work in which they were described, therefore the French were justified in applying their own names. But this plea ignored the fact that if the coasts were not charted in any work published before 1807, they had been, to the full knowledge of the French officers, charted by Flinders, whose work would have been published earlier if he had not been forcibly detained. Again he argued* (* Preface to volume 3.) that, inasmuch as "jamais Peron ni moi"--where Freycinet assumed part of the responsibility--knew of the work done by Flinders until his book was published, the work of the French was truly one of discovery; and as to the names given by the English navigator, "it is certain that we could not employ them without knowing them." But it was not true that Freycinet, Peron, or Baudin was unaware of the discoveries made by Flinders. Even were there not his specific statement that he explained his discoveries and showed one of his charts to illustrate them, it would be incredible that while the French and English ships lay together for some weeks at Port Jackson, with tents erected on the same piece of ground, the officers frequently meeting on friendly terms, Freycinet and Peron should not have learnt what the Investigator had been doing. Both the French authors are individually mentioned by Flinders as having been present on one or other of these occasions, and Freycinet does not deny the statement. Further, Captain Hamelin reported to the French Government, in 1803, that Flinders had traced the coast from the Leeuwin to Encounter Bay, and had discovered a large and beautiful island which he had named "L'Ile des Kangaroux."* (* Moniteur, 27 Thermidor, Revolutionary Year 11.)

It is true that the French were not acquainted with Flinders' names, except in the one case of Kangaroo Island. He told Baudin what name he had given in that case. Nevertheless they ignored it, and called the island Ile Decres. But even when they did know of the names given to features of the coast by a previous English navigator, Peron and Freycinet disregarded them. Grant's Narrative of the Voyage of the Lady Nelson was published, together with his eye-chart of the coast from Cape Banks to Wilson's Promontory, in 1803. Flinders states positively that Grant's "discoveries were known to M. Peron and the French expedition in 1802";* (* Voyage 1 201.) as indeed we might well suppose, for Grant was not the man to allow any one with whom he came in contact to remain unaware of his achievements, and he was in Sydney just before the French arrived there. They would hear of him from many people. Yet Grant's names, inscribed in plain print on his published chart, were all ignored on the Terre Napoleon charts--his Cape Nelson becoming Cap Montaigne; his Cape Otway, Cap Desaix; his Cape Schanck, Cap Richelieu; and so forth.

The contention that the south coast exploration of the French was "entirely a work of discovery,"* (* Freycinet, 2 page 23.) although they were forestalled in it by Flinders and Grant, is neither true nor sensible. If it could be held that the voyage of a vessel sailing without a chart or a pilot along a coast previously unknown to its officers was

"entirely a work of discovery," then a ship that should sail under such conditions along any piece of coast--say from Boulogne to La Hague--would accomplish "a work of discovery." Discovery is a matter of priority, or the word is meaningless.

Freycinet's notes nowhere meet the gravest feature of the case--the prolongation of the imprisonment of Flinders until the French could complete their own charts for publication. The talk about not knowing what Flinders' names were, the affected ignorance of his prior claims, were crudely disingenuous. Freycinet knew perfectly where Flinders was, and why his charts were not issued. The Moniteur contained several references to his case. Sir Joseph Banks repeatedly pressed leading members of the Institute to lend their influence to secure his liberation. But Freycinet, who had shared in the generous hospitality of the British governor in Sydney--extended at a time when the French crews were sorely stricken--and should have been moved by gratitude, to say nothing of justice, to help in undoing an act of wrong to a fellow-navigator, does not seem to have taken the slightest step in this direction, nor does he in any of his writings express any regret concerning the unhappy fate that overtook the English captain.

The claim made in behalf of Baudin's expedition can best be stated in the language of Peron. Dentrecasteaux, he wrote, not having advanced beyond the islands of St. Peter and St. Francis, which form the extremity of Nuyts Land, and the English not having carried their researches farther than Westernport, "it follows that all the portion between the last-mentioned port and Nuyts Land was unknown at the time when we arrived on these shores." Peron's words were not candid. It is true that part of the shores in question were unknown when Baudin's ships "arrived." They "arrived" off Cape Leeuwin in May 1801, before Flinders left England, though not before Grant had discovered his stretch of coast. (Grant reached Sydney, having roughly traced the coast from Cape Banks to Cape Schanck, on December 16, 1800.) If, however, Peron meant to convey that the coasts were unknown when Baudin's ships actually sailed along them, he stated what was not the case. Let us hear Flinders in reply. "M. Peron should not have said that the south coast from Westernport to Nuyts Land was then unknown, but that it was unknown to them, for Captain Grant, of the Lady Nelson, had discovered the eastern part from Westernport to the longitude 140 degrees 14 minutes in the year 1800, before the French ships sailed from Europe, and on the west I had explored the coast and islands from Nuyts Land to Cape Jervis in 138 degrees 10 minutes." In other words, Grant's eye-chart connected up the coast between the extremity of George Bass's exploration, Westernport, and Cape Banks to the east, while Flinders had traversed the coast between Nuyts Land and Encounter Bay to the west, leaving a gap of only about fifty leagues of sandy shore, upon which there is "neither river, inlet, or place of shelter," that was actually discovered by Baudin. Flinders not only admitted that the French had discovered this particularly barren and uninteresting stretch of land, but marked it upon his charts* (* Cf. plate 4 in Flinders' Atlas, for example.) as "discovered by Captain Baudin, 1802." The French on their charts, however, made not the slightest reference to the discoveries of either Flinders or Grant.

The true Terre Napoleon, therefore, if the name were to survive at all, would be from a point north-west of Cape Banks in the state of South Australia, to the mouth of the river Murray in Encounter Bay. The names marked on a modern map indicate the sort of country that it is in the main. Chinaman's Wells, M'Grath's Flat, Salt Creek, Martin's Washpool, Jim Crow's Flat, and Tilley's Swamp are examples. They are not noble-sounding designations to inscribe at the back of coasts once dignified by the name of the greatest figure in modern history. It is rather to be regretted that the name Terre Napoleon has slipped off modern maps. It is historically interesting. When Eric the Red, as the Saga tells us, discovered Greenland, he so called it because "men would be the more readily persuaded thither if the land had a good name." Most will agree that Terre Napoleon sounds a bit better than Pipe Clay Plain or Willow Swamp, which are other choice flowers in the same garden.* (* These "virginal chaste names" are taken from the map of South Australia, by the Surveyor-General of that State, 1892.)

There is no evidence to warrant the belief that Napoleon had anything whatever to do with affixing his name to the territory to which it was applied, or with the nomenclature of the features of the coast. Nor would there be anything remarkable in the use of the name Terre Napoleon, if the French had really discovered the region so described. In every part of the world there are lands named after the rulers of the nations to which the discoverers or founders belonged. Raleigh named Virginia "from the maiden Queen"; the two Carolinas preserve the name of the amorous monarch who granted the original charter of colonisation "out of a Pious and good intention for ye propogacion of ye Christian faith amongst ye Barbarous and Ignorant Indians, ye Inlargement of his Empire and Dominions, and Inriching of his Subjects"; and two states of Australia commemorate by their names the great Queen who occupied the British throne when they were founded. There would have been nothing unusual or improper in the action of the French in styling the country from Wilson's Promontory to Cape Adieu "Terre Napoleon," except that they did not discover it. What they did excites a feeling akin to derision, because it bore the character of "jumping a claim," to use an Australian mining phrase.

Nor is it to be inferred that affixing the name was intended to assert possession. An examination of the large chart of Australia shows that the whole of the coast-line, except this particular stretch, was previously named. There was Terre de Nuyts on the south-west; Terre de Leeuwin, Terre d'Endrels, Terre d'Endracht were on the west; Terre de Witt on the north-west; Terre d'Arnheim and Terre de Carpentarie on the north. New South Wales was marked as occupying the whole of the east. The styling of the freshly discovered south Terre Napoleon was a mere piece of courtiership. If Napoleon had ever been strong enough to strike a blow at the British in Australia, the probabilities are that he would have endeavoured to oust them from New South Wales, and would not have troubled himself very much about the coasts that were named after him. It was his way to strike at the heart of his enemy, and the heart of British settlement in Australia was located at Port Jackson.

It has been represented in one of the best books in English on the Napoleonic period,* (* Dr. Holland Rose's Life of Napoleon 1 381.) that "the names given by Flinders on the coasts of Western and South Australia, have been retained owing to the priority of his investigation, but the French names have been kept up on the coast between the mouth of the Murray and Bass Straits for the same reason." That statement, however, is very much too wide. Capes Patton, Otway, Nelson, Bridgewater, Northumberland and Banks, Portland Bay and Julia Percy Island, all lie between the points mentioned, and all of them were named by Grant, who first discovered them and marked them on his chart. None of the French names is properly in present employment east of Cape Buffon; for their Cap Boufflers, which is marked on a few maps, is really the Cape Banks of Grant. The only names freshly applied by Baudin to natural features of the mainland on the Terre Napoleon charts, and which are in current use, are Cape Buffon, Cape Lannes, Rivoli Bay, Cape Jaffa, Cape Rabelais, Cape Dombey, Guichen Bay, Cape Bernoulli, Lacepede Bay, and Cape Morard de Galles. Some or other of these names may be found, in some order, on some modern map, but the sequence is variable, and they are not all to be found on any single map with which the author is acquainted; because there are more names than there are natural capes and bays to which they can apply. The remainder of the French names between Lacepede Bay and Cape Jervis, and most of those in the more easterly section, are not marked on any current map, because in some instances they do not represent features of the coast which are sufficiently pronounced to require names, whilst in other cases they are applied to islands, capes, and bays that do not exist.* (* The difficulty of identifying the features marked on the Terre Napoleon charts is made clear by comparing them with a few good modern maps. Thus, taking them from south-east to north-west, they appear on the French charts in the following order: 1, Cap Buffon; 2, Cap Lannes; 3, Baie de Rivoli; 4, Cap de Jaffa; 5, Cap Rabelais; 6, Cap Dombey; 7, Baie de Guichen; 8, Cap Bernoulli; 9, Baie Lacepede; 10, Cap Morard de Galles; 11, Cap Fermat; 12, Cap Monge 13, Cap Caffarelli; 14, Cap Villars; 15, Baie Mollien; 16, Cap Mollien 17, Baie Cretet; 18, Cap Cretet; 19, Iles Decaen; 20, Cap Decaen; 21, Cap Montelivet. On the large Continental map constructed by the Department of Lands and Survey, State of Victoria, 1879, the order of the names included is as follows: 1, Buffon; 2, Rivoli; 3, Lannes; 4, Guichen; 5, Jaffa; 6, Lacepede. Rabelais, Dombey, Bernoulli, and the rest are omitted, the draftsman evidently being unable to find features to which to apply them. On the large map compiled in the office of the Surveyor-General, State of South Australia, 1892, the order of the names is: 1, Buffon; 2, Rivoli; 3, Rabelais; 4, Lannes; 5, Dombey; 6, Guichen; 7, Jaffa; 8, Lacepede. On the excellent map in M'Lean's New Atlas of Australia, 1886, we find: 1, Buffon; 2, Rivoli; 3, Lannes; 4, Guichen; 5, Jaffa; 6, Lacepede. Flinders, on his separate chart of this part of the coast, found features for the names of Buffon, Lannes, Rivoli, and Bernoulli, but left out Rabelais, Dombey, Guichen, and Lacepede. In no case is the cape or bay on the Terre Napoleon chart of this part of the coast a tolerably good representation of an actuality.) Where are Cap Monge, Cap Caffarelli, Cap Mollien, Cap du Mont St. Bernard, Ile Latrelle, or Baie Descartes? They are not to be found. Freycinet* (* Preface to the 1824 edition of the Voyage de Decouvertes page 13, note.) complained that Flinders, on his charts, had erroneously applied the

French names between Cap Monge and Cap Lannes. It was a singular complaint to make, seeing that Flinders gave the French full credit for their discoveries, whilst they omitted all reference to his work on their charts. But Flinders' difficulty was that of all later map-makers: he could not find all the places to which Baudin had given names. He did his best; but it is evidently easier to sprinkle a coast-line with the contents of a biographical dictionary, than to fit all the names in.

The French cartography of the portions of the coast eastward of the two gulfs was so badly done, in fact, that many of the features indicated on the charts are mere geographical Mrs. Harrises--there "ain't no sich" places. The coast was not surveyed at all, but was sketched roughly, inaccurately, and out of scale; so that even the sandy stretch now known as the Coorong, which is about as featureless as a railway embankment, was fitted with names and drawn with corrugations as though it were as jagged as a gigantic saw. Our respect for such names as Montesquieu and Descartes causes us to regret that they should have been wasted on a cape and a bay that geography knows not; and our abiding interest in the sinister genius of Talleyrand fosters the wish that his patronymic had been reserved for some other feature than the curve of the coast which holds "the Rip" of Port Phillip, though in one sense he who was so wont to "fish in troubled waters" is not inaptly associated with that boil of sea."*

(* "Loud-voiced and reckless as the wild tide-race
That whips our harbour mouth,"

wrote Mr. Rudyard Kipling ("Song of the English") of the people of Melbourne. It is believed that he meant to be complimentary.)

The south and west of Kangaroo Island were, however, first charted by Baudin, and his names survive there. Flinders had marked these shores with a dotted line on his chart, to signify that he had not surveyed them. He intended to complete this bit of work on his return, but he was "caught in the clutch of circumstance," and was never permitted to return. Such names as Cape Borda, Cape Linois, Maupertuis Bay, Cape Gautheaume, Bougainville Bay, and a few others, preserve the memory of the French expedition on Kangaroo Island. A rock, known as Frenchman's Rock, upon which a record of the visit was cut, also survives there.

A few months after the publication of the Terre Napoleon charts in 1807, the truth about the matter became known. Sir Joseph Banks, who had been kept well informed by Flinders about the work which he had performed, and who had done all that was possible to obtain his release from Mauritius, was influential in scientific circles throughout Europe. Fortunately, he had ample material at his disposal. Flinders had sent home some finished charts from Sydney, and during his imprisonment he wrote up a manuscript journal which he succeeded in getting conveyed to England. It was this manuscript which the Admiralty permitted to be perused by the writer of the powerful Quarterly Review article of August 1810. The feeling of indignation evoked by the treatment which the navigator received was intensified when the publication of his Voyage and his charts in 1814 showed the measure of his shining merits--his thoroughness, his accuracy,

his diligence, the beauty of his drawings, the vast extent of the entirely new work which he had done, and the manliness, gentleness, courage, and fairness of his personal character.

In addition to the discredit, of which he had to bear his full share, Freycinet was involved in perplexities of another kind. It was a convenient piece of flattery to name the two great gulfs after Napoleon and Josephine when they were Emperor and Empress; but the courtier-like compliment was embarrassing when Josephine was supplanted by Marie Louise, and it became offensive when Napoleon himself was overthrown and a Bourbon once more occupied the throne of France. Many of the other names, too, were those of men no longer in favour. Yet the earlier volumes of the Voyage de Decouvertes had referred in the text to the names on the French charts as though they formed a final system of nomenclature. What was poor Freycinet to do in completing the work? Here, indeed, was a sailor hoist to his own yard-arm with his own halyard. The work could not be dropped, since faith had to be kept with purchasers. In the event, the old names were employed in the text of the completed book, but a fresh atlas was issued (1817) with the name Terre Napoleon wiped off the principal chart, most of the names changed to those given by Flinders and Grant, and a neat note in the corner taking the place of the former eagle--which was moulting; no longer the screaming fowl it used to be--announcing that "this map of New Holland is an exact reduction of that contained in the first edition."* (* "Cette carte de la Nouvelle-Hollande est une reduction exacte de celle contenue dans la premiere edition du Voyage aux Terres Australes.") The announcement was not quite true. It was not "une reduction exacte." The imperial bird had flown, and the names had undergone systematic revision. The Bonaparte family were pitilessly evicted. It was a new and smaller map, with a new allocation of names. Freycinet's name appeared upon it, and he probably wrote the inscription in the corner.

CHAPTER 5. DID THE FRENCH USE FLINDERS' CHARTS?

Assertions commonly made as to French plagiarism of Flinders' charts.
Lack of evidence to support the charges.
General Decaen and his career.
The facts as to Flinders' charts.
The sealed trunks.
The third log-book and its contents; detention of it by Decaen, and the reasons for his conduct.
Restoration of Flinders' papers, except the log-book and despatches.
Do Freycinet's charts show evidence of the use of Flinders' material?
How did the French obtain their chart of Port Phillip?
Peron's report to Decaen as to British intentions in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and the effect on his mind.
Liberation of Flinders.
Capture of Mauritius by the British.
English naval officers and the governor.
Later career of Decaen.

Flinders, in the decrepit little Cumberland, put into Port Louis,

Mauritius, on December 16, 1803. He was not permitted to sail out again till July 1810; and then he was a broken man, smitten with diseases, the painful product of exposure, shipwreck, confinement in a tropical climate, anxiety, and bitter years of heart-sickness and weary disappointment; yet a brave man still, with some hope nobly burning in the true hero's heart of him; but with less vitality than hope, so that he could do no more than write his big book of travel, and then lie down to die.

Many loose statements have been written about the use which the French made of Flinders' charts while he was held in captivity. It has been too often taken for granted that the evidence of plagiarism is beyond dispute. Not only popular writers, but historians with claims to be considered scientific, are substantially in agreement on this point. Two examples will indicate what is meant. Messrs. Becke and Jeffery, in their Naval Pioneers of Australia (page 216), assert that "among other indignities he suffered, he found that the charts taken from him by Decaen had been appropriated to Baudin's exploring expedition." Again, to take a work appealing to a different section of readers, the Cambridge Modern History also charges the French with "the use of his papers to appropriate for their ships the credit of his discoveries."* (* Volume 9 page 739 (Professor Egerton). Two more examples may be cited. Thus, Laurie, Story of Australasia (1896) page 86. "He found that his journals and charts had been stolen by the French governor of the Mauritius and transferred to Paris, where the fullest advantage was taken of them by M. Peron." Again, Jose, Australasia (1901) page 21: "His maps were taken to France to be published there with French names as the work of French explorers.")

The charge is, it will be observed, that not only did the French governor of Mauritius imprison the English navigator despite his passport, detaining him years after the other members of the Cumberland's company had been liberated, but that Flinders' charts and papers were improperly used in the preparation of the history of Baudin's expedition. Indeed, the accusation is equivalent to one of garrotting: that General Decaen seized and bound his victim, robbed him, and enabled Freycinet and Peron to use his work as their own.

So widely has this view been diffused, that probably few will be prepared for the assurance that there is no evidence to support it. On the contrary, as will be shown, neither Peron nor Freycinet ever saw any chart or journal taken from Flinders. Use was made, it is believed, of one British chart which may possibly have been his--that embodying a drawing of Port Phillip--but reasons will be given for the opinion that this, whether it was Flinders' chart or Murray's, was seen by the French before Baudin's ships left Sydney, and was certainly not copied at Mauritius.

Before proving these statements, it will be convenient to make the reader acquainted with the Captain-General or Military-Governor of Mauritius, Charles Decaen. He was a rough, dogged, somewhat brutal type of soldier, who had attained to eminence during the revolutionary wars. Born at Caen in Normandy in 1769, he served during his youth for three years in the

artillery, and then entered a lawyer's office in his native town; but during the wars of the Revolution, when France was pressed by enemies on all sides, he threw aside quills and parchments, and, in his twenty-third year, entered upon his strenuous fighting career. Thenceforth, until after the signing of the Treaty of Luneville in 1801, he was almost constantly engaged in military operations. He had risen from the ranks, and won commendation for stubborn valour from such commanders as Desaix, Kleber, Hoche, Westermann, and Moreau. He participated in the cruel war of La Vendee, won fresh laurels during the campaign of the Rhine (1796), and fought with a furious lust for battle under the noble Moreau at Hohenlinden. By that time (1800) he had become a general of division, and on the eve of the battle, when he brought up his force and made his appearance at a council of war, Moreau greeted him with the flattering remark, "Ah! here is Decaen; the battle will be ours to-morrow." He was recognised as a strong-willed general, not brilliant, but very determined, and as also a thoroughly capable and honest administrator. Napoleon, in 1803, selected him for Indian service, and stationed him at the Isle of France (Mauritius), in the hope that if all went well a heavy blow might some day be struck at British power in India. Decaen was not a courtier, nor a scholar, nor a man of sentiment, but a plain, coarse, downright soldier; a true Norman, and a thorough son of the Revolution. He was not the kind of man to be interested in navigation, discovery, or the expansion of human knowledge; and appeals made to him on these grounds on behalf of Flinders were futile. Yet we must do justice to the admirable side of Decaen's character, by observing that he bore a reputation for generosity among his fellow-soldiers; and he was a very efficient and economical governor, maintaining a reputation for probity that did not distinguish too many of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic generals. Flinders, just in his opinion even of an enemy, wrote to Sir Joseph Banks that Decaen bore among the people of the island "the character of having a good heart, though too hasty and violent." It is pleasant to find him writing thus of the man who had wronged him, at a time when he had good reason for feeling bitter; and we certainly need not think worse of Decaen than did the man who suffered most from the general's callous insensibility.

Now, the clear facts with regard to the taking from Flinders of his charts, papers, log-books, and journals are these. On December 17, the day after his arrival at the island, it was signified to him that the governor intended to detain him. All his charts and journals relating to the voyage, and the letters and official packets which he was carrying to England from Sydney, were put in a trunk, which was sealed by Flinders at the desire of the French officers who were sent by Decaen to arrest him. He signed a paper certifying that all the "charts, journals, and papers of the voyage" had been thus placed in the trunk.* (* Flinders, Voyage 2 361.) On the following day (Sunday, December 18) he was informed that the governor wished to have extracts made from his journals, showing the causes which had compelled him to quit the Investigator, for which ship and for no other, according to Decaen's contention, the passport had been granted. He also wished to elicit from the journals evidence of the reasons which had induced Flinders to stop at Mauritius, instead of sailing for the Cape of Good Hope. The officers explained that General Decaen considered it to be necessary to have these extracts for

transmission to the French Government, "to justify himself for granting that assistance to the Cumberland which had been ordered for the Investigator." So far he had not, as a fact, granted any assistance to the Cumberland; for the imprisonment of her commander and crew can hardly be called "assistance." But as Flinders was convinced that an examination of his latest log-book would manifest his bona fides, and assure both the governor and the French Government that he was no spy, as Decaen accused him of being, he broke the seal of the trunk, and took out "the third volume of my rough log-book, which contained the whole of what they desired to know, and pointing out the parts in question to the secretary, told him to make such extracts as should be thought requisite."* (* Flinders, Voyage 2 364.) All the other papers and books were at once returned to the trunk, and sealed as before.

The third log-book was the only document pertaining to Flinders' discoveries which Decaen ever had in his possession. It was never returned. The rightful owner never saw it again. It has never since been produced. Flinders applied for it repeatedly. On the very day before he was liberated, he made a final demand for it. Mr. Hope, the British commissary for the exchange of prisoners, made a formal official application for it in 1810, but met with "a positive refusal both of the book and of permission to take a copy of it."* (* Hope's report to the Admiralty, October 25, 1810 (Historical Records of New South Wales 7 435).) In 1811, after Flinders reached England, the Admiralty, at his instance, requested the French Government to insist upon its restoration. At the end of his book, published 1814, Flinders earnestly protested against Decaen's continued detention of it. But it was not restored.

This book contained Flinders' "Journal of transactions and observations on board the Investigator, the Porpoise, the Hope cutter, and Cumberland schooner," for the preceding six months.* (* Flinders, Voyage 2 378 and 463.) There was therefore nothing in it which could have been of any use in relation to the so-called Terre Napoleon. The log-book embodying Flinders' observations on those coasts pertained to a period before the six months just mentioned, and was never seen by Decaen, nor did he see any of Flinders' charts whatever.

Towards the end of December the whole of the remaining books and papers of Flinders, even including his family letters, were, in his presence, collected from the ship by M. Bonnefoy, an interpreter, and Colonel Monistrol, Decaen's secretary--who "acted throughout with much politeness, apologising for what they were obliged by their orders to execute"--and sealed up in another trunk.* (* Ibid 2 367.) Later in the same month (December 26), Flinders, wishing to occupy his time in confinement by proceeding with his work, wrote to the governor, requesting that he might have his printed volumes, and two or three charts and manuscript books, for the purpose of finishing his chart of the Gulf of Carpentaria, adding in explanation that some of his papers were lost in the wreck of the Porpoise, and he wished to finish the work from memory, with the aid of the remaining materials, before the details faded from his recollection. Decaen acceded to his request, and Flinders took out two log-books, such charts as were necessary, all his private letters, and his journals of bearings and astronomical observations. He

also took out his naval signal-book, which he destroyed, lest it should be seen by any French officer. He gave a receipt for the documents, and the remainder were once more locked up in the trunk, which was again sealed by Flinders.* (* Voyage 2 378.) The papers so obtained were the "greatest part"* (* Flinders, letter to Governor King, August 1804, and letter to Banks, July 12. Historical Records of New South Wales 4 411 and 396.) of his books and charts, and the possession of them, enabling Flinders to devote his energies to the work he loved, relieved the depression which imprisonment and illness cast upon his active brain and body.

In February of the following year Flinders made another application for more books and papers, consisting of the greater part of his "original fair charts,"* (* Voyage 2 384.) for the purpose of making an abridgment of his discoveries upon a single sheet. The governor was by this time very angry with his captive; the more so, probably, as he was conscious of the inadequacy of the reasons for detaining him. But the demeanour of the English captain did not please him either. Flinders, maintaining the dignity of his uniform, had not assumed a humble mien, and had even refused an invitation to dine with the general unless he could attend, not as a prisoner, but as an officer free and unsuspect. If Decaen really believed him to be a spy, why did he invite him? The governor, however, was not now in a mood to oblige his prisoner, and in response to his application for more papers, curtly replied that he would attend to the request when freed from more pressing business. Flinders in March urged Colonel Monistrol to intercede; complained in May that the manuscripts were still withheld; and, being unable to make any impression on the obdurate Decaen, completed his map with the aid of another journal kept by Mr. Akin, the master of the Investigator, who was a fellow-prisoner until May 1805.

These remaining documents were not restored till August 1807, when Flinders was invited to go to Port Louis from the house in the country where part of his imprisonment was spent, and take possession of the trunk. He found that rats had eaten their way into it, and had made great havoc among his papers, totally destroying some. But the seals were unbroken, and Flinders gave a receipt for the contents, acknowledging that the most important documents had happily escaped the rats.* (* Voyage 2 462.) He was an observant man, and if he had had any suspicion that the charts had been tampered with, would have promptly said so. There is not, however, the faintest reason for believing that the trunk had been opened between December 1803, when Flinders was permitted to take out the "greatest part" of his important papers, and August 1807, when the remainder were restored to him. The only missing documents were the few which the rats had eaten, the third log-book, which Decaen refused to give up, and two packets of official despatches which the Cumberland was carrying from Sydney to England, and which Colonel Monistrol informed him had been "long ago disposed of." The Colonel "supposed that something in them had contributed to my imprisonment." They had been "disposed of" by being sent to Paris for the perusal of Napoleon’s Government.

Why, however, did Decaen refuse permission to Flinders to have the last

of his papers till the year 1807? Why had he willingly permitted him to take some of them in December 1803, but declined to let him have any more till nearly four years later? A comparison of dates is instructive on this point. As has already been said, the first volume of Peron's Voyage de Decouvertes aux Terres Australes, and the first edition of the atlas containing two of Freycinet's charts, were published in 1807. Making all allowances for the obstinate character of Decaen, it is most significant that the remainder of Flinders' charts and papers were kept from him until the very time when Freycinet was ready to publish the first and hurried edition of his atlas. It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the governor was acting under influences exerted from Paris, private if not official, in refusing the navigator access to the material which it was believed was essential to the completion of the charts that would demonstrate his discoveries, until the French officer could hurry out a makeshift atlas and fictitious claims could be based upon it.

This conduct was reprehensible enough, but, it must be insisted, there is no ground whatever for the too frequently made assertion that Flinders' charts were surreptitiously copied or actually stolen--for the loose manner in which the affair has been related in some books renders doubtful which of the two accusations the authors desired to make.* (* Blair, Cyclopaedia of Australasia page 131, actually says that Baudin, "having taken copies of Flinders' charts, sailed for France, where he published a book and received great applause from the French nation, who called him the greatest discoverer of the present century." Spirit-writing one has heard of, but not even the Psychical Research Society has recorded the case of a dead man copying hydrographical charts. A similar disregard of the fact that Baudin died before the return of his ships occurs in J.E. Tenison Woods' History of Exploration in Australia (1865) volume 1 page 174, where we are informed that Flinders was detained in Mauritius, because "at that time the Emperor Napoleon was obliging Admiral Baudin [sic] to usurp the glory of his discoveries"; a case of post-mortem promotion.) Not only is there no evidence to support any such charge, but Flinders himself never accused Decaen of making an improper use of the papers in the trunk, nor did he ever allege that the two charts contained in the French atlas of 1807, or those in Freycinet's folio atlas of 1812--which he probably saw before his death in July 1814--were founded upon or owed anything to his drawings. He simply set forth the facts with his habitual exactness and fairness; and where Flinders was just, there is surely no warrant for others to perpetuate an accusation which originated in a period of intense national hatred and jealousy, and bears its birth-mark upon it.

A critical examination of Freycinet's charts is alone sufficient to shatter the opinion that he utilised the drawings of the English navigator. Had he even seen them, his own work would have been more accurate than it was, and his large chart of New Holland would have been more complete. It has already been shown that the French chart of the so-called Terre Napoleon coasts was in large measure defective, many capes, islands, and bays being represented that have no existence in fact, and a large portion of the outline being crudely and erroneously drawn. Not only so, but if Freycinet had had copies of Flinders' charts before him, use would certainly have been made of them to give greater

completeness to the eastern and north-western shores. Flinders, in his last voyage in the Investigator, had made important discoveries on the Queensland coast and in the Gulf of Carpentaria. He had discovered, for instance, Port Bowen and Port Curtis, which had been missed by Cook, had given greater definiteness to the islands near the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef, and had made a dangerous acquaintance with the Reef itself, discovering one narrow alley through it which is marked on modern maps as Flinders' Passage. In the Gulf of Carpentaria he had also done some entirely original work. He had shown, for example, that Cape Van Diemen, represented as a projection from the mainland on all previous maps, was really part of an island, which he named Mornington Isle. Freycinet's charts reveal not the faintest trace of the fresh discoveries which Flinders had achieved around east and north-east Australia, nor do they in any particular indicate that their manifold serious imperfections had been corrected by reference to Flinders' superb charts. In short, the French work, though beautifully engraved and printed, was, in a geographical sense, for the most part too poor to justify the suspicion that Freycinet received aid from the drawings of the persevering captain of the Investigator.

The circumstances attending the imprisonment of Flinders, and the precipitate haste with which Freycinet's work was pushed forward, undoubtedly furnished prima facie justification for the suspicion, indignantly voiced by contemporary English writers, and which has been hardened into a direct accusation since, that an act of plagiarism was committed, dishonest in itself, and doubly guilty from the circumstances in which it was performed. The Quarterly reviewer of 1817* pointed out that the few charts in Freycinet's atlas "ARE VERY LIKE THOSE OF CAPTAIN FLINDERS, ONLY MUCH INFERIOR IN POINT OF EXECUTION." (* Volume 17 pages 229 to 230; the italics are the reviewer's. The plagiarism legend--for such it is--originated with this Quarterly article. The earliest biographer of Flinders, in the Naval Chronicle 32 page 177, wrote very strongly of General Decaen, considering that he was "worthy of his Corsican master," and that his name "will be consigned to infamy as long as mankind shall consider it honourable to promote science and civilised to practise hospitality," but alleged no improper use of the charts. C.A. Walckenaer, who wrote the excellent life of Flinders in the Biographie Universelle, published in 1856, said that the French Government was "inexcusable d'avoir retenu Flinders en captivite," but denied that his charts were improperly used, and promised that when he came to write the life of Peron in a succeeding volume, he would by an analysis of the evidence refute the story. But Walckenaer died in 1852, before his Flinders article was published, and the author of the article on Peron did not carry out his predecessor's undertaking. It is to be presumed that Walckenaer would have exhibited the facts set out above. Alfred de Lacaze, in his article on Flinders in the Nouvelle Biographie Generale 17 932, wrote that the excuses given for the imprisonment of Flinders formed "pauvres pretextes"; but declared that the seals put on Flinders' papers in Mauritius were "loyalement respecte pendant les six ans que dura la captivite du navigateur anglais." That was true. It is a pleasure to acknowledge that all the references to Flinders which the author has seen in French works unanimously and strongly condemn the treatment of him, and do ample justice to his splendid qualities.) They are very like in

one respect, namely, in the representation of Spencer's and St. Vincent's Gulfs and Kangaroo Island. In other particulars, at all events as far as relates to the Terre Napoleon coasts, the French charts are quite unlike those of Flinders. But contemporaries--knowing that Flinders' charts had been taken from him by Decaen, and that he had been held in captivity until the French could finish their work, and then, comparing his charts with Freycinet's, finding that parts of the coasts discovered by the English captain were well represented on the French charts, while other parts of the outline of Terra Australis were badly done or inadequate--not unnaturally drew the inference that the well-drawn sections were based upon drawings improperly acquired. If the chain of evidence was not complete, the violent racial animosities then prevalent moulded the missing links in the fervent heat of imagination.

But it is quite easy to account for the superior cartography of the two gulfs and Kangaroo Island. Le Geographe visited this region twice. In April 1802, after meeting Flinders in Encounter Bay, Baudin sailed west, and endeavoured to penetrate the two gulfs. But his corvette drew too much water to permit him to go far, and he determined to give up the attempt, and to devote "une seconde campagne" to "la reconnaissance complete de ces deux grands enfoncements."* (* Voyage de Decouvertes 3 11.) In Sydney, Governor King permitted him to purchase a small locally constructed vessel of light draught--called the Casuarina, because she was built of she-oak--with which to explore rivers and shallow waters. The command of this boat was entrusted to Lieutenant Louis de Freycinet, the future cartographer and part historian of the expedition; and the charts of the two gulfs and Kangaroo Island were made by, or under the superintendence of, that officer. Freycinet was not with Le Geographe on her first cruise in these waters, and was not responsible for the original drawings upon which his charts of the Terre Napoleon coasts eastward of Cape Jervis were founded. But the fact that he surveyed the gulfs and Kangaroo Island on the second visit, in 1803, is quite sufficient to account for the improved cartography of this region in the French atlas. Whatever we may think of the part played by Freycinet in relation to Flinders and the history of the expedition, his professional ability was of a high character. All the charting work done by him, when he had not to depend upon the rough drawings of inferior men, was very good. His interest in scientific navigation was deep, and when, in 1817, he was given the command of a fresh French expedition, consisting of the Uranie and the Physicienne, the large folio atlas produced by him indicated that he had studied the technicalities of his profession to excellent purpose.

The superiority of the work done by Baudin's expedition in the vicinity of the two gulfs, then, was not due to any fraudulent use of Flinders' material, but simply to the fact that there was a competent officer in charge of it at that time; and there is nothing on the charts for which Freycinet was personally responsible to justify the belief that his work claiming to be original was not genuinely his own. When, in 1824, he published a second edition of the Voyage de Decouvertes aux Terres Australes,* (* In octavo volumes; the first edition was in quarto.) he repudiated with quiet dignity the suggestion that the work of the English navigator had been plagiarised.* (* "C'est assez," he wrote, "repousser

des accusations odieuses et envenimees, fondees sur des idees chimeriques, avec absence de toute espece de preuve. Le temps, qui calme les passions humaines et permet toujours a la verite de reprendre ses droits, fera justice d'accusations concues avec legerete et soutenues avec inconvenance. Peron et Flinders sont morts; l'un et l'autre ont des titres certains a notre estime, a notre admiration; ils vivront, ainsi que leurs travaux, dans la memoire des hommes, et les nuages que je cherche a dissiper auront disparu sans retour" (volume 1 Preface page 11). One cannot but be touched by that appeal; but at the same time it is to be observed that in the very preface in which he made it, Freycinet did far less than justice to the work of Flinders.) Except for the Port Phillip part of the work, we might fairly say that history has commonly done him and his confreres a serious injustice.

But we have seen that, although Port Phillip was included in the French charts, and inside soundings were actually shown, neither the port nor the entrance was seen by the expedition. How was that information obtained?

Le Geographe and Le Naturaliste lay in Sydney harbour from June 20 to November 18, 1802, their afflicted crews receiving medical treatment, and their officers enjoying the hospitality of Governor King. Flinders and Lieutenant John Murray, who discovered Port Phillip, were both there during part of the same time. It was then that the French learnt of the existence of the great harbour of which Baudin was ignorant when he met Flinders in Encounter Bay; and it is highly probable that by some means they obtained a copy of the chart which they saw.

Grounds for stating that that is a probability will be advanced a little later. But let us first see how the drawing of Port Phillip that does appear on the Terre Napoleon charts got there.

It was taken, as Freycinet acknowledged,* (* Voyage de Decouvertes 3 430.) "from a manuscript chart prepared on the English ship Armiston, in 1804. In 1806 the French frigate La Piedmontoise captured the British ship Fame. Amongst the papers found on board was this manuscript chart. It so happened that one of the officers of La Piedmontoise was Lieutenant Charles Baudin des Ardennes, who had been a junior officer on Le Naturaliste from 1800 to 1804. (He was no relative of Captain Baudin. The family of Baudin des Ardennes was very well known in France; and this officer became a distinguished French admiral.) He took possession of the manuscript, and handed it over to Freycinet, who made use of it in preparing his charts.

Probably it was a very rough chart; but even so, if Freycinet had had anything like a drawing of Port Phillip made on Le Geographe, he would have turned out a better piece of work. Not only is the outline very defective, but the "lay" of the Nepean peninsula is so grossly wrong that this alone would suffice to show that Freycinet did not merely correct his chart with the aid of that captured from the Fame, but that the whole drawing of Port Phillip was fitted in, like a patch. However ill a navigator may draw, he always knows whether a coast along which he is sailing runs west or north-west. A mariner's apprentice would know that.

But on the Terre Napoleon charts, the peninsula lies due east and west, whereas in reality, as the reader will see by reference to any good map, it has a decidedly north-westerly inclination. The patch was not well put on. The consequence of this bad cobbling was to give a box-like, rectangular appearance to the bay, utterly unlike the reality. The east and west sides were carried about as far as Mornington and St. Leonards respectively, in two nearly straight and parallel lines; Swan Bay and Swan Island were missed altogether; and the graceful curve of the coast round by Sorrento and Dromana--a curve most grateful to the eye on a day when sea and sky are blue, and the silver sands and white cliffs shine in the clear light--was tortured into a sharp bend. It was a very rough bit of work.

The fact that an expedition sent out for discovery purposes, and which named a considerable extent of the coast-line traversed after the Emperor who had enabled it to be despatched, had to depend upon a manuscript accidentally obtained from a captured British merchant ship for a chart of the principal port in the territory so flauntingly denominated, hardly calls for comment. But even when we are in possession of this information, we are still left in some doubt as to whether the French had not some sort of a drawing of Port Phillip before they left Sydney. Otherwise the course pursued by their commodore after quitting that port is quite unaccountable. The following reasons induce that belief.

When Baudin bade an affectionate and grateful farewell to Governor King at Sydney on November 18, he sailed direct to King Island, which is situated in Bass Strait, on the 40th parallel of south latitude, about midway between the south-east of Cape Otway and the north-west corner of Tasmania. Le Geographe was accompanied by Le Naturaliste and the little Casuarina. A camp was established on the island, which was fully charted. Baudin had missed it on his former voyage, though he had sailed within a few miles of it. It will be remembered that when Flinders conversed with him in Encounter Bay, and "inquired concerning a large island said to lie in the western entrance of Bass Strait," Baudin said he had not seen it, "and seemed to doubt much of its existence."* (*Flinders, Voyage 1 188.) But Flinders found it easily enough, and spent a little time there before entering Port Phillip. It was doubtless this inquiry of Flinders that induced Baudin to mark down on his chart a purely fictitious island far westward of the actual one, and to inscribe against it the words, "it is believed that an island exists in this latitude."* (* "On croit qu'il existe une ile par cette latitude." See the chart, a little west of Cape Bridgewater (Cap Duquesne).)

As Baudin afterwards found the real island, it is curious that the imaginary one should have been kept upon his chart; but there is a reason for that also. While the French lay at King Island, most of the work done up to date--geographical, zoological, and other--was collected and sent back to France on Le Naturaliste; Le Geographe and the Casuarina remaining to finish the exploratory voyage. Le Naturaliste sailed for Europe on December 16, and entered the port of Havre on June 6, 1803. Had Baudin lived to return to France, and to supervise the completion of the charts, it is most probable that he would have erased the island which was merely supposed, as he had since charted the real one; but Freycinet,

not having been present at the meeting with Flinders, and knowing nothing of the reason which induced Baudin to set it down, left it there--a quaint little fragment of corroboration of the truth of Flinders' narrative of the Encounter Bay incident.

Now, when at the end of December Le Geographe and the Casuarina sailed from King Island--the naturalists having in the interval profitably enjoyed themselves in collecting plants, insects, and marine specimens--they made direct for Kangaroo Island, four hundred miles away, to resume the work which had been commenced in the gulfs in the previous April and May. The whole of the movements of the ships up to this time are to be read in the printed logs appended to volume 3 of the Voyage de Decouvertes. Baudin made no call at Port Phillip, nor did one of his three vessels visit the harbour either before or after reaching King Island. But by this time Baudin knew all about the port, and it is surely difficult to suppose that he would have sailed straight past it in December unless at length he had it marked on his rough charts. His officers knew about it too, though none of them had seen it; for Captain Hamelin of Le Naturaliste reported when he reached Paris, that, as he left King Island, he met and spoke to "an English goelette on her way to Port Philips [sic], south-east coast."* (* Moniteur, 27 Thermidor.) It was the Cumberland, Lieutenant Charles Robbins, bound on a mission to be explained later.

It seems reasonable to assume that when Le Naturaliste sailed for France on December 16, and the two other ships for Kangaroo Island later in the same month, Baudin was quite satisfied that he had in his possession as complete a representation of the whole of the Terre Napoleon coasts westward to the gulfs, as would justify him in resuming the work from that situation. Clearly, then, he obtained a Port Phillip drawing of some kind before he left Sydney.

From what source could Baudin have obtained such a chart, however rough and partial?

Up to the time when he lay at Port Jackson, only two ships had ever entered Port Phillip. These were the Lady Nelson, under Murray's command, in February 1802--the harbour having been discovered in the previous month--and the Investigator, under Flinders, in April and May. No other keels had, from the moment of the discovery until Baudin's vessels finally left these coasts, breasted the broad expanse of waters at the head of which the great city of Melbourne now stands. The next ship to pass the heads was the Cumberland, which, early in 1803, entered with Surveyor Grimes on board, to make the first complete survey of the port. But by that time Baudin was far away. From one or other of the two available sources, therefore, Baudin must have obtained a drawing, assuming that he did obtain one in Sydney; and if he did not, his sailing past the port, when he had an opportunity of entering it in December, was surely as extraordinary a piece of wilful negligence as is to be found in the annals of exploration.

It is possible that Baudin or one of his officers saw some drawing made on the Lady Nelson. If they saw one made by Murray himself, it is not

likely to have been a very good one. Murray was not a skilled cartographer. Governor King, who liked him, and wished to secure promotion for him, had to confess in writing to the Duke of Portland, that he did not "possess the qualities of an astronomer and surveyor," which was putting the matter in a very friendly fashion. If a chart or crude drawing by Murray had been obtained, Freycinet might still be glad to get the Fame chart which he used.

Both in his book and his correspondence Flinders mentions having shown charts to Baudin; and though the French commodore did not reciprocate by showing any of his work to Flinders, we may fairly regard that as due to reluctance to challenge comparisons. Flinders was without a rival in his generation for the beauty, completeness, and accuracy of his hydrographical work, and Captain Baudin’s excuses probably sprang from pride. The reason he gave was that his charts were to be finished in Paris. But there was nothing to prevent his showing the preliminary drawings to Flinders, and as a fact he had shown them to King. If Flinders had had a sight of them he would have detected at a glance the absence of any indication of Port Phillip. But we learn from the Moniteur of 27 Thermidor, Revolutionary Year 11 (August 15, 1803), which published a progress report of the expedition, that the charts sent home by Baudin were very rough. Part of the coast was described as being "figuree assez grossierement et sans details."

Flinders, it should be explained, did not publish the chart which he made when he entered Port Phillip with the Investigator, because by the time when he was preparing his work for publication, a copy of the complete survey chart made by Grimes had been supplied to him by the Admiralty. He used Grimes’s drawing in preference to his own--acknowledging the authorship, of course--because when he found Port Phillip he was not in a position to examine it thoroughly. His supplies, after his long voyage, had become depleted, and he could not delay.

It is most likely that the French learnt of the existence of Port Phillip from Flinders, though not at all likely that they were able to obtain a copy of his drawing. If Baudin got one at all, it must have been Murray’s.

Freycinet did not acknowledge on any of his charts the source whence he obtained his Port Phillip drawing. Obviously, it would have been honest to do so. All he did was to insert two lines at the bottom of the page in that part of volume 3 dealing with navigation details, where very few readers would observe the reference.

There remains the question: Why did General Decaen keep Flinders’ third log-book when restoring to him all his other papers? The reason suggested by Flinders himself is probably the right one: that the governor retained it in order that he might be better able to justify himself to Napoleon in case he was blamed for disregarding the passport. He "did not choose to have his accusations disproved by the production either of the original or of an authenticated copy." It is difficult to see what other motive Decaen can have had. The sheer cantankerous desire to annoy and injure a man who had angered him can hardly have been so strong within

him as even to cause a disregard of the common proprietary rights of his prisoner. The book could have been of no use to Decaen for any other purpose. Its contents had no bearing on the Terre Napoleon coasts, as they related to a period subsequent to Flinders' voyage there. Doubtless the book showed why the Cumberland called at Mauritius, but the reason for that was palpable. The idea that a leaky twenty-nine ton schooner, with her pumps out of gear, could have put into Port Louis with any aggressive intent against the great French nation, which had a powerful squadron under Admiral Linois in the Indian Ocean, was too absurd for consideration. But Decaen was plainly hunting for reasons for detaining Flinders, and it is possible that he found a shred of justification in the despatches which the Cumberland was carrying from Governor King to the British Government; though the protracted character of the imprisonment, after every other member of the ship's company had been set free, cannot have been due to that motive.

It is most probable that representations made to Decaen by Peron, before Le Geographe sailed, had an effect upon the mind of the governor which induced him to regard any ship flying the British flag as an enemy to French policy. Peron, from what he had seen of the growth of Port Jackson, and from the prompt audacity and pugnacious assertiveness of an incident which occurred at King Island--to be described in the ninth chapter--had conceived an inflated idea of the enormity of British pretensions in the southern hemisphere. He was convinced that, using the Sydney settlement as a base of operations, the British intended to dominate the whole Pacific Ocean, even to the degree of menacing the Spanish colonies of South America. On 20th Frimaire, Revolutionary Year 12 (December 11, 1803), four days before Le Geographe sailed from the island, Peron set his views on paper in a report to Decaen, stating that his interviews with officers, magistrates, clergymen, and other classes of people in Sydney, had convinced him that his anticipations were well founded. He pointed out that already the English were extending their operations to the Sandwich, Friendly, Society, Navigator, and other islands of the South Pacific; that at Norfolk Island they had a colony of between fifteen hundred and sixteen hundred people, and found its timber to be of great value for shipbuilding; and that gradually the British Government, by extending their military posts and trading stations across the ocean, would sooner or later establish themselves within striking distance of Chili and Peru.* (* Peron's report to General Decaen is given in M. Henri Prentout's valuable treatise, L'Ile de France sous Decaen, 1803 to 1810; essai sur la politique coloniale du premier empire, Paris 1901 page 380. M. Prentout's book is extremely fair, and, based as it is mainly upon the voluminous papers of General Decaen, preserved in his native town of Caen, is authoritative.) Peron pointed to the political insecurity of the Spanish-American colonies, and predicted that the outbreak of revolution in them, possibly with the connivance of the English, would further the deep designs of that absorbent and dominating nation.* (* A French author of later date, Prevost-Paradol (La France Nouvelle, published in 1868), predicted that some day "a new Monroe doctrine would forbid old Europe, in the name of the United States of Australia, to put foot upon an isle of the Pacific.")

Decaen was pondering over Peron's inflammatory memorandum when the lame

little Cumberland staggered into Port Louis. Here, a victim ready to hand, was one of the instruments of the extension of British dominion, the foremost explorer in the service of the British Crown. True, Flinders had a passport from the French Government, but it was made out, not for the Cumberland but for the Investigator. To take advantage of such a point, when the Investigator had had to be abandoned as unseaworthy, was manifestly to seize the flimsiest pretext for imprisoning the man whom the winds and waves had brought within his power.* (* "C'etait une chicane," says M. Henri Prentout, page 382.) But Decaen was in the temper for regarding the English navigator as a spy, and he imprisoned him first and looked for evidence to justify himself afterwards. He had just read Peron's report; and "it was not unnatural," says a learned French historian somewhat naively, "that the Captain-General should attribute to the English savant the intention of playing at Port Louis the role that our naturalist had played at Port Jackson."* (* Ibid.) The imputation is unjust to Peron, who had not "spied" in Port Jackson, because the English there had manifested no disposition to conceal. Nothing that he reported was what the Government had wished him not to see; they had helped him to see all that he desired; and his preposterous political inferences, though devoid of foundation, hardly amounted to a positive breach of hospitality. Besides, had Decaen feared that the release of Flinders would be dangerous because he might report the weak state of the defences of the island, the same would have applied to the liberation of the junior officers and men of the Cumberland. They, however, were permitted to return to England after a brief period of detention.

Decaen also alleged that Flinders was personally rude to him in presenting himself before him "le chapeau sur la tete." Flinders was undoubtedly smarting under a sense of wrong at the time, but discourtesy was by no means a feature of his character; and to imprison a man for six and a half years for not taking his hat off would have been queer conduct from a son of the Revolution!

But Decaen's reasons for his treatment of his captive were not consistent with themselves. He gave quite another set in a report to his Government, alleging that the detention of Flinders was justified as a measure of reprisals on account of the action of the English at Pondicherry and the Cape; and, entirely in the manner of a man looking for a shred of justification for doing the unjustifiable, he alleged that vigorous aggressive action on his part was necessary, because it was evident to him that the English meant to absorb the whole commerce of the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, and the China Sea, basing his statements on the report of Peron, of which he sent a copy to Paris. Not only did he represent that the British intended to annihilate French power in India, and supplant Spanish authority in South America, but he regarded their repeated visits to Timor, their action in regard to Java in 1798, and their establishment at Penang, off the Malay Peninsula, as clear evidence that the "greedy and devouring jaws" of the English lion were ready to swallow the Dutch East Indies likewise. How these nefarious designs afforded a reason for imprisoning Matthew Flinders is not apparent; but Decaen was pleading for the despatch of troops to enable him to make an effective attack upon the English in India,* (* Prentout, page 383.) and he seemed to suppose that the holding up of the explorer would give

satisfaction in Paris, and further the accomplishment of his plans.

In October 1810, only three months after the liberation of Flinders, the Isle of France was closely blockaded by a British squadron under Vice-Admiral Bertie. In December, General Decaen agreed to capitulate, and Major-General Abercromby took possession of the island, which has ever since been a British dependency. It is unfortunate that the British officers did not at this time remember that Decaen had kept Flinders' third log-book. He had written to Vice-Admiral Bertie from the Cape of Good Hope, in July 1810, requesting that "if any occurrences should put General Decaen within his power," he would demand the volume from him. But the request was overlooked, "in the tumult of events," when the capitulation took place.* (* Flinders, letter to the Admiralty, in Historical Records of New South Wales 7 529.) It is, however, significant of the honour in which naval men held the intrepid navigator, that after the capitulation the British officers refused to dine with Decaen, on account of his treatment of Flinders.* (* Souvenirs d'un vieux colon, quoted by Prentout, page 660.) It was not the first time that gentlemen wearing the naval uniform of England had refused to eat at his table.

On January 6, 1811, a French schooner was captured bearing despatches from France. Amongst them was a despatch informing Decaen that Napoleon had superseded him in the governorship.* (* Naval Chronicle volume 25 337.) Before he could obey the summons to France, the British had captured the island and sent him home. It is scarcely likely that the Emperor's order of recall was due to disapproval of Decaen's conduct in continuing Flinders' imprisonment after the French Government had ordered his release, although there is in existence a decree signed by Napoleon, dated March 11, 1806, "authorising the Minister of Marine to restore his ship to Captain Flinders of the English schooner Cumberland."* (* The document is in the Archives Nationales, Paris (AP. 4 pl. 1260, n. 47). The author is indebted for this fact to Dr. Charles Schmidt, the archivist at the Archives Nationales, through the courtesy of Mr. F.M. Bladen, of the Public Library, Sydney. Dr. Schmidt has also supplied the information that this is "the only document concerning Captain Flinders in our possession." "Concerning the voyages of Peron and Freycinet, I have found nothing in the Archives," he adds.) As Flinders was not released till July 1810, Decaen certainly did disregard the Emperor's command for three years--from July 1807, when the decree was received by him, though it is to be remembered that he restored the trunk of papers in the very next month (August). But Napoleon had signified to Decaen's aide-de-camp, Barois--who was sent to France in 1804 with special instructions to mention the Flinders affair to the Emperor--that he approved of what the general had done;* (* Prentout, page 393. "Napoleon parut approuver les raisons que Barois invoquait pour justifier la conduite de Decaen.") and Napoleon was scarcely likely to be gravely concerned about the calamities of an English sea captain at that particular time. It is true that between 1804 and the release, Sir Joseph Banks and other influential men in the world of learning had been active in urging the liberation of the navigator. The venerable Bougainville was one of these. It is also true that Napoleon prided himself on his interest in scientific work. But Decaen had been a good servant, placed in a difficult situation, where there was much responsibility and little

glory to be won; and even if the Emperor had felt annoyed at the disregard of orders, the matter did not affect his major lines of policy, and Decaen was safe in reckoning that the Imperial displeasure would not be severely displayed. But why he risked giving offence to Napoleon at all by the disregard of orders, there is, it would seem, nothing in Decaen's papers to show. M. Prentout, who has studied them carefully, is driven back on the suggestion that the prolongation of the captivity was due to "entetement"--stubbornness. But it cost the administration four hundred and fifty francs per month to maintain Flinders,* (* Prentout, page 382.) and it seems improbable, when the finances of the island were difficult to adjust and severe economies were enforced, that Decaen, an economical man, would have kept up this expense year after year, disregarding alike the protests of the prisoner, the demands of Lord Wellesley and Admiral Pellew, and later, the direct orders of the French Government, unless some influence were at work and some practical interest furnished a motive. The obstinacy of Decaen is not a sufficient reason. We know, however, that it suited Freycinet very well to have Flinders detained till he could get his own charts ready, and that his atlas was precipitately published in the first instance. The connection between these occurrences and Decaen's cruel perversity must, in the absence of clear proof, be bridged by inference, if at all.

Napoleon was, however, a soldier after all--much else as well, but a soldier first and foremost; and so was Decaen. When the general returned to France, his Imperial master had urgent need for stern, stubborn, fighting men of his type. He submitted to a court-martial* (* "Un conseil d'enquete." Biographie Universelle 10 248.) in reference to the surrender of Mauritius, but was exonerated. The discretion that he had exercised in not obeying the decree for the liberation of Flinders was evidently not made the ground of serious complaint against him, for in 1813 we find him commanding the army of Catalonia, participating gallantly in the campaign of the Pyrenees, and distinguishing himself at Barcelona under Marshal Suchet. For this service he was made a Comte of the Empire. When Napoleon was banished to Elba the Comte Decaen donned the white cockade, and took service under Louis XVIII, but on the return of his old master he, like Ney and some other of the tough warriors of the First Empire, forswore his fidelity to the Bourbons. He was one of the generals left to guard the southern frontiers of France while Napoleon played his last stake for dominion in the terrific war game that ended with the cataclysm of Waterloo. That event terminated Decaen's military course. For a while he was imprisoned, but his life was not taken, as was that of the gallant Ney; and in a few months he was liberated at the instance of the Duchesse d'Angouleme. Thenceforth he lived a colourless, quiet, penurious life in the vicinity of his native Caen, regretting not at all, one fancies, the ruin of the useful career of the enterprising English navigator. His poverty was honourable, for he had handled large funds during the Consulate and Empire; and there is probably as much sincerity as pathos in what he said to Soult and Gouvion-Saint-Cyr in his declining days, that nothing remained to him after thirty years of honourable service and the occupancy of high offices, except the satisfaction of having at all times done his duty. He died in 1832. His official papers fill no fewer than one hundred and forty-nine volumes and are preserved in the library of the ancient Norman city whose name he bore as his own.

CHAPTER 6. THE MOTIVES OF BONAPARTE.

Did Bonaparte desire to establish French colonial dominions in Australia? The case stated.

We will now turn to quite another aspect of the Terre Napoleon story, and one which to many readers will be more fruitful in interest. An investigation of the work of Baudin's expedition on the particular stretch of coast to which was applied the name of the most potent personage in modern history has necessarily demanded close application to geographical details, and a minute scrutiny of claims and occurrences. We enter into a wider historical realm when we begin to consider the motives which led Bonaparte to despatch the expedition of 1800 to 1804. Here we are no longer confined to shores which, at the time when we are concerned with them, were the abode of desolation and the nursery of a solitude uninterrupted for untallied ages, save by the screams of innumerable sea-birds, or, occasionally, here and there, by the corroboree cries of naked savages, whose kitchen-middens, feet thick with shells, still betray the places where they feasted.

We wish to know why Bonaparte, who had overturned the Directory by the audacity of Brumaire and hoisted himself into the dominating position of First Consul in the year before Le Geographe and Le Naturaliste were sent to the South Seas, authorised the undertaking of that enterprise. Was it what it purported to be, an expedition of exploration, or was it a move in a cunning game of state-craft by a player whose board, as some would have us believe, was the whole planet? Had Bonaparte, so soon after ascending to supremacy in the Government of France, already conceived the dazzling dream of a vast world-empire acknowledging his sway, and was this a step towards the achievement of it? If not that, was he desirous by this means of striking a blow at the prestige of Great Britain, whose hero Nelson had smashed his fleet at the Nile two years before? Or had he ideals in the direction of establishing French colonial dominions in southern latitudes, and did he desire to obtain accurate information as to where the tricolour might most advantageously be planted? It ought to be possible, out of the copious store of available material relative to Napoleon's era, to form a sound opinion on this fascinating subject. But we had better resolve to have the material before we do formulate a conclusion, and not jump to one regardless of evidence, or the lack of it.

In this inquiry very little assistance is given to the student by those classical historians of the period to whose voluminous writings reference might naturally be made. There is not, for example, the slightest allusion to Baudin's expedition or the Terre Napoleon incidents in Thiers' twenty-tomed Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire; nor can the reader get much assistance from consulting many British works on the same epoch. An endeavour has, however, been made to set the facts in their right perspective, by a brilliant contemporary English historian, Dr. John Holland Rose, somewhat curtly in his Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era, but more fully in his Life of Napoleon.* (* Life of Napoleon 1 379

to 383. Still later, in his lecture on "England's Commercial Struggle with Napoleon," included in the Lectures on the Nineteenth Century, edited by F.A. Kirkpatrick (1908), Dr. Holland Rose pursues the same theme.) The present writer, after an independent study of the facts, is unable to share Dr. Holland Rose's view, as will presently appear, but the desire being less to urge an opinion than to present the case in its true relations, it will be convenient to state Dr. Rose's presentment of it before proceeding to look at it from other aspects.

"The unknown continent of Australia," says the historian, "appealed to Napoleon's imagination, which pictured its solitudes transformed by French energy into a second fatherland." Bonaparte had "early turned his eyes to that land." He took a copy of Cook's voyages with him to Egypt, and no sooner was he firmly installed as First Consul, than he "planned with the Institute of France a great French expedition to New Holland." It is represented that the Terre Napoleon maps show that "under the guise of being an emissary of civilisation, Commodore Baudin was prepared to claim half the continent for France."* (* Ibid page 381. The Terre Napoleon region is far from being half the continent of Australia, if that be what Dr. Holland Rose's words mean. One observes, by the way, a tendency on the part of English writers to use very small maps when speaking of the size of things in Australia.) Indeed, his inquiry "about the extent of British claims on the Pacific coast was so significant as to elicit from Governor King the reply that the whole of Van Diemen's Land and of the coast from Cape Howe on the south of the mainland to Cape York on the north, was British territory." The facts relative to the awakening of suspicion in Governor King's mind--to be discussed hereafter--are likewise stated; together with those affecting the settlements of Hobart and Port Phillip; and it is concluded that "the plans of Napoleon for the acquisition of Van Diemen's Land and the middle of Australia, had an effect like that which the ambition of Montcalm, Dupleix, Lally, and Peron has exerted on the ultimate destiny of many a vast and fertile territory."* (* Ibid page 382. One or two errors of fact may as well be indicated. Murray's discovery of Port Phillip was made in 1802, not in 1801, as stated on page 380 of the Life of Napoleon; the title of Flinders' book was not "A Voyage of Discovery to the Australian Isles" (page 381), but A Voyage to Terra Australis; Bass, the discoverer of the Strait bearing his name, was not a lieutenant (page 380), but a surgeon on H.M.S. Reliance. The Freycinet Peninsula, the French name of which is mentioned as being "still retained" (page 381), is not, it should be understood, on the Terre Napoleon coast at all, but in Eastern Tasmania. Dr. Rose's error as to the retention of other French names has been dealt with in Chapter 4.)

These passages submit with definiteness the view that Bonaparte, in 1800, despatched Baudin's ships from motives of political policy. He had "plans" for the requisition of territory in Australia; he wished to found a "second fatherland" for the French; Baudin was "prepared to claim half the continent for France." Now, the reader who turns to Dr. Holland Rose's book * (* He who turns to it without reading it through will miss an opulent source of profit and pleasure.) for references to proofs of these statements, will be disappointed. The learned author, who is usually liberal in his citation of authorities, here confines himself to

the Voyage de Decouvertes of Peron and Freycinet, the Voyage of Flinders, and the collection of documents in the seven volumes of the Historical Records of New South Wales--all works of first-class importance, but none of them bearing out the broad general statements as to the First Consul's plans and intentions. Not a scrap of evidence is adduced from memoirs, letters, or state papers. To represent Napoleon as obsessed with magnificent ideas of universal dominion, scanning, like Milton's Satan from the mountain height, the immensity of many realms, and aspiring to rule them all--to do this is to present an enthralling picture, inflaming the imagination of the reader; and, perhaps, of the writer too. But we must beware of drawing an inference and painting it to look like a fact; we must regard historical data through the clear white glass of criticism, not through the coloured window of a gorgeous generalisation.

The remainder of our task, then, shall be devoted to examining the origins of Baudin's expedition. We will inquire into the instructions given to the commander; we will follow his vessels with a careful eye to any incidents that may point to ulterior political purposes; we will have regard to the suspicions engendered at the time, how far they were justifiable, and what consequences followed from them; we will search for motives; and we will look at what the expedition did, in case there should by any chance thereby be disclosed any hint of an aspiration towards territorial acquisition. We will try to regard the evidence as a whole, the object being--as the object of all honest historical inquiry must be--to ascertain the truth about it, freed from those jealousies and prejudices which, so freely deposited at the time, tend to consolidate and petrify until, as with the guano massed hard on islets in Australasian seas, it is difficult to get at the solid rock beneath for the accretions upon it, and sometimes not easy to discriminate rock from accretion.

CHAPTER 7. GENESIS OF BAUDIN'S EXPEDITION.

Baudin's one of a series of French expeditions.
The building up of the map of Australia.
Early map-makers.
Terra Australis.
Dutch navigators.
Emmerie Mollineux's map.
Tasman and Dampier.
The Petites Lettres of Maupertuis.
De Brosses and his Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes.
French voyages that originated from it.
Bougainville; Marion-Dufresne; La Perouse; Bruni Dentrecasteaux.
Voyages subsequent to Baudin's.
The object of the voyages scientific and exploratory.
The Institute of France and its proposition.
Received by Bonaparte with interest.
Bonaparte's interest in geography and travel.
His authorisation of the expedition.
The Committee of the Institute and their instructions.
Fitting out of the expedition.

Le Geographe and Le Naturaliste.
The staff.
Francois Peron.
Captain Nicolas Baudin.

French interest in southern exploration did not commence nor did it cease with the expedition of 1800 to 1804. We fall into a radical error if we regard that as an isolated endeavour. It was, in truth, a link in a chain: one of a series of efforts made by the French to solve what was, during the eighteenth century, a problem with which the scientific intellect of Europe was much concerned.

The tardy and piecemeal fashion in which definiteness was given to southern latitudes on the map of the world makes a curious chapter in the history of geographical research. After the ships of Magellan and Drake had circumnavigated the globe, and a very large part of America had been mapped, there still lay, south of the tracks of those adventurers who rounded the Horn and breasted the Pacific, a region that remained unknown--a Terra Australis, Great Southern Continent, or Terra Incognita as it was vaguely and variously termed. Map-makers, having no certain data concerning this vast uncharted area, commonly sprawled across the extremity of the southern hemisphere a purely fanciful outline of imaginary land. Terra Australis was the playground of the cartographers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They seemed to abhor blank spaces. Some of the most beautiful of the old maps make the oceans busy with spouting whales, sportive dolphins, and galleons with bellying sails; but what to do with the great staring expanse of vacancy at the bottom their authors did not know. So they drew a crooked line across the map to represent land, and stuck upon it the label Terra Australis, or one of the other designations just mentioned. The configuration of the territory on different maps did not agree, and not one of them signified a coast with anything like the form of the real Great Southern Continent.

To the period of fancy succeeded that of patchwork. Came the Dutch, often blown out of their true course from the Cape of Good Hope to the Spice Islands, and stumbling upon the shores of Western Australia. To some such accident we probably owe the piece of improved cartography shown upon Emmerie Mollineux's map, which Hakluyt inserted in some copies of the second edition of his Principal Navigations, and which Shakespeare is supposed to have had in mind when, in a merry scene in Twelfth Night, he made Maria say of Malvolio (3 2 85): "He does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map with the AUGMENTATION OF THE INDIES."* (* See Mr. Charles Coote's paper in Transactions of New Shakespeare Society, 1877 to 1879. He read the phrase "augmentation of the Indies," as referring to this and some other additions to the map of the world, now for the first time shown. In those days, of course, "the Indies" meant pretty well everything out of Europe, including America. It is curious that Flinders called the aboriginals whom he saw in Port Phillip "Indians." Probably all coloured peoples were "Indians" to seamen even so late as his day. There is a fine copy of the map referred to in volume 1 of the 1903 edition of Hakluyt, edited by Professor Walter Raleigh.) This map marks an improvement, in the sense that an approach to the truth, probably founded on actual observation, is an improvement on a large,

comprehensive piece of guess work. Emmerie Mollineux expunged the imaginary region, and substituted a small tongue of land, shaped like a thimble. It was doubtless copied from some Dutch chart; and though we must not look for precision of outline at so early a date, it is sufficient to show that some navigator had seen, hereabouts, a real piece of Australia, and had made a note of what it looked like. It is not much, but, rightly regarded, it is like the first gleam of light on the dark sky where the dawn is to paint its radiance.

English Dampier (1686 to 1688, and 1699 to 1701) and Dutch Tasman (1642 to 1644) made the most substantial contributions to the world's knowledge of the true form of Australia to be credited to any individual navigators before the coming of Cook, the greatest of all.

It is very strange that so long a period as a century and a half should have been allowed to lapse between Tasman's very remarkable voyage and Flinders' completion of the outline of Australia, and that three-quarters of a century should have separated the explorations of Dampier and Cook. Here, crooned over by her great gum forests, baring her broad breast of plains to the sun and moon, lay a land holding within her immense solitudes unimaginable wealth; genial in climate, rich in soil, abounding in mineral treasures, fit to be a home for happy, industrious millions. Yet, while avarice and enterprise schemed and fought for the west and the east, this treasury of the south remained unsolicited. It is not for us to regret that Australia was left for a race that knew how to woo her with affection and to conquer her with their science and their will, yet we can but wonder that fortune should have been so tardy and so reticent in disclosing a fifth division of the globe.

While this piecing together of the outline of the continent was proceeding, speculation was naturally rife among men of science as to what countries southern latitudes contained, and what their capabilities were. It was essentially a scientific problem awaiting solution; and it is not surprising that the French, quick-brained, inquisitive, eager in pursuit of ideas, should have been active in this field.

Their intellectual concern with South Sea discovery may be said to date from the publication of the Petites Lettres of Pierre Louis Moreau de Maupertuis. He was, like some of whom Browning has written, a "person of some importance in his day," and his writings on physics are still mentioned with respect in works devoted to the history of science. But he is perhaps chiefly remembered as the savant whom Frederick the Great attracted to his court during a period of aloofness from the scintillating Voltaire, and who consequently became a writhing target for the jealous ridicule of that waspish wit. Poor Maupertuis, unhappy in his exit from life, would appear to have been restless after it, for his ghost is averred to have stalked in the hall of the Academy of Berlin, and to have been seen by a brother professor there, the remarkable phenomenon being solemnly recorded in the Transactions of that learned body.* (* See Sir Walter Scott's Demonology and Witchcraft, Letter 1.) But of far more practical importance than the appearance of his perturbed shade, was the effect of his Petites Lettres, which suggested twelve projects for the advancement of knowledge, one of which was the promotion

of discovery in the southern hemisphere.

Shortly after its publication, Maupertuis' proposition was discussed by a society of accomplished students meeting at Dijon, the ancient capital of Burgundy. A member of the Society to whom much deference was paid, was Charles de Brosses, lawyer, scholar, and President of the Parlement of the Province.* (* The local parliaments were abolished in the reign of Louis XV, reinstated by Louis XVI, and finally swept away in the stormy demolition of ancient institutions to make ground for the constitution of 1791.) De Brosses was an industrious student and writer, the translator of Sallust into French, and author of several valuable historical and philological works, including a number of learned papers which may be read--or not--in the stout calf-bound quartos enshrining the records of the Academy of Inscriptions.* (* His papers in that regiment of tomes range over a period of fifty years, from 1746 to 1796. They deal chiefly with Roman history, and especially with points suggested by the author's profound study of Sallust. Gibbon pays De Brosses the compliment of quoting two of his works, and commends his "SINGULAR diligence," with emphasis on the adjective. (See Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Bury's edition 4 37 and 7 168.) He was also Voltaire's landlord at Tournay, and had a quarrel with him about a matter of firewood; but De Brosses was a lawyer, whilst Voltaire was only a philosopher and a poet, so that of course the result was "qu'il enrage d'avoir enfin a payer."* (* Lanson's Voltaire page 139.)

The discussion at Dijon was more fruitful in results than such colloquies usually are. De Brosses was especially struck with the utility of exploration in southern seas, and considered that the French nation should take the lead in such an endeavour. He spoke for a full hour in support of this particular suggestion of Maupertuis, and when he had finished his fellow-members assured him that what he had advanced was so novel and interesting that he would do well to expand his ideas into an essay, to be read at the next meeting. De Brosses did more: for he wrote two solid quarto volumes, published at Paris in 1756--"avec approbation et privilege du Roy," as the title page says--in which he related all that he could learn about previous voyages to the south, and pointed out, with generous amplitude, in limpid, fluent French, the desirableness of pursuing further discoveries there. Incidentally he coined a useful word: to Monsieur le President Charles de Brosses we owe the name "Australasia."* (* De Brosses, Histoire des Navigations aux Terres Australes 1 426 and 2 367. Max Muller, in his Lectures on the Origin of Religion page 59, stated that De Brosses coined three valuable words, "fetishism," "Polynesia," and "Australia." He certainly did not originate the word Australia, which does not occur anywhere in his book. Quiros, in 1606, named one of the islands of the New Hebrides group Austrialia del Espiritu Santo, though he seems to have done so in compliment to Philip III, who ruled Austria as well as Spain. See Markham, Voyages of Quiros volume 1 page 30 Hakluyt Society. "Australasia" was De Brosses' new name for a broad division of the globe. He derived it from the Latin australis = southern + Asia.)

A work written over one hundred and fifty years ago, recommending a project long since completed, can hardly be expected to be full of living

interest. Yet this book of De Brosses, apart from the research which it evinced, was infused with a large, humane spirit that lifted it high above the level of a prospectus. The author had a sense of patriotism that looked beyond the aggrandisement that might accrue from extensive acquisitions, to the ideal of spreading French civilisation as a beneficent force. He wished his country to share in a great work of discovery that would redound to its glory as well as to its influence. Glory, he wrote, in a fine piece of French prose, is the dominant passion of kings; but their common and inveterate error is to search for it in war--that is to say, in the reciprocal misfortunes of their subjects and their neighbours. But there never is any true glory for them unless the happiness of nations is the object of their enterprises. In the task which he recommended, the grandeur of the object was joined to utility. To augment the lands known to civilised mankind by a new world, and to enrich the old world with the natural products of the new--this would be the effect of the fresh discoveries that he anticipated. What comparison could there be between such a project and the conquest--it might be the unjust conquest--of some ravaged piece of territory, of two or three fortresses battered by cannon and acquired by the massacre, the ruin, the desolation, and the regrets of the vanquished people; bought, too, at a price a hundred times greater than would suffice for the entire voyage of discovery proposed. He pointed out that the task could only be taken in hand by a government; it was too large for individuals. But the result was certain. In truth, to succeed in the complete discovery of the Terres Australes, it was not necessary to have any other end in view than success: it was simply necessary to employ proper means and sufficient forces.

De Brosses discussed the probably most advantageous situation for settlement in the South Seas, though in doing so he was hampered by insufficient knowledge. Relying upon the reports of Tasman, he considered New Zealand and "la terre de Diemen"--that is, Tasmania--too distant and too little known for an experiment; whilst the narratives of Dampier did not make those parts of New Holland that he had visited--the west and north of Australia--appear attractive. On the whole, he favoured the island to the east of Papua-New Guinea--known as New Britain (now New Pomerania), and the Austrialia del Espiritu Santo of the Spanish navigator Quiros as very suitable. It is interesting to note that the present French settlements in the New Hebrides embrace the latter island, whilst their possessions in the New Caledonia group are quite close; so that ultimately they have planted themselves on the very spot which a century and a half ago the savant of Dijon considered best fitted for them. De Brosses admitted that the establishment of such settlements as he recommended would not be the work of a day. Great enterprises require great efforts. It is for individuals to measure years, he loftily said; nations calculate by centuries. Powerful peoples must take extended views of things; and kings, as their chiefs, animated by the desire of glory and the love of country and of humanity, ought to consider themselves as personalities persisting always, and working for eternity.* (* The passages summarised are to be found in De Brosses, 1: 4, 8, 11, 19; and 2: 368, 380, 383.)

The elevated tone of De Brosses' book was calculated to make a telling

appeal to the French nation, with their love of eclat and their ready receptivity. It was made, too, in the age of Voltaire, when the great man was living at Lausanne; and when, too, another of equally enduring fame, Edward Gibbon, was, in the same neighbourhood, polishing those balanced periods in which he has related the degeneracy of the successors of the Caesars. It was an age of intellectual ferment. Rousseau was writing his Contrat Social (1760), the Encyclopedie was leavening Gallic thought. There was a particular proneness to accept fresh ideas; a new sense of national consciousness was awakening.

The effect of the President's work was almost immediate. De Brosses published it in 1756; and in 1766 Louis de Bougainville sailed from France in command of La Boudeuse and L'Etoile on a voyage around the world.* (* See the Voyage du Monde par la frigate du Roi La Boudeuse et la flute L'Etoile en 1766, 1767, 1768, 1769, by Louis de Bougainville, Paris, 1771.) A eulogy pronounced on De Brosses before the Academy of Inscriptions by Dupuy* (* Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions 42 177.) hardly put the case too strongly when it was said that before he died he had the satisfaction to see in Europe men animated by his spirit, who had gone forth, braving the risks of a long voyage, to make discoveries; though the prophecy that centuries to come would doubtless count to his glory the achievements of navigators has not been verified. The world is perhaps too little inclined to accord to him who promulgates an idea the praise readily bestowed upon those who realise it.

Bougainville discovered the Navigator Islands, re-discovered the Solomon group, and was only just forestalled by the Englishman, Wallis, in the discovery of Tahiti. He produced a book of travel which may be read with scarcely less interest than the wonderful work of his contemporary, Cook.

The voyage of Nicholas Marion-Dufresne (1771) differed from the other French expeditions of the series in that one of the ships belonged to the commander, and part of the cost was sustained by him. He was fired by a passion for exploration, which led him to propose that he should take out his vessel, Le Mascurin, in company with a ship of the navy, and that a grant should be made to him from the public funds. The French Government acquiesced, and gave him Le Marquis de Castries. He did some exploring in southern Tasmania, but his career was cut short in New Zealand, where, in the Bay of Islands, he was killed and eaten by Maories in 1772.* (* Rochon, Nouveau Voyage a la Mar du Sud, Paris 1783.) One of the objects of the voyage was to take back to Tahiti a native woman, Aontouron, who had been brought to Paris by Bougainville to be shown at the court of Louis XV; but she died of smallpox en route.

Again, in 1785, the expedition commanded by the ill-fated La Perouse sailed from France on a discovery voyage.* (* See the Voyage de la Perouse, redige par M. L.A. Milet-Mureau, volume 1 Paris 1797.) The appearance of his two ships, La Boussole and l'Astrolabe, in Port Jackson only a fortnight after Governor Phillip had landed in Botany Bay to establish the first British settlement in Australia, was an event not less surprising to the governor than to La Perouse, who had left France before colonisation was intended by the English Government, though he heard of it in the course of the voyage. The French navigator remained in

the harbour from February 23 to March 10 (1788), on excellent terms with Phillip; and then, sailing away to pursue his discoveries, "vanished trackless into blue immensity, and only some mournful mysterious shadow of him hovered long in all heads and hearts." His remark to Captain King, "Mr. Cook has done so much that he has left me nothing to do but admire his work," indicated the generous candour of his disposition. His fate after he sailed from Sydney remained a mystery for forty years, Flinders, on his voyage inside the Barrier Reef in 1802, kept a lookout for wreckage that might afford a key to the problem. He wrote: "The French navigator La Perouse, whose unfortunate situation, if in existence, was always present to my mind, had been wrecked, as it was thought, somewhere in the neighbourhood of New Caledonia; and if so the remnants of his ships were likely to be brought upon this coast by the trade winds, and might indicate the situation of the reef or island which had proved so fatal to him. With such an indication, I was led to believe in the possibility of finding the place; and though the hope of restoring La Perouse or any of his companions to their country and friends could not, after so many years, be rationally entertained, yet to gain some knowledge of their fate would do away with the pain of suspense, and it might not be too late to retrieve some documents of their discoveries.* (* Flinders, Voyage 2 48.) The vigilance of Flinders to this end indicates the fascination which the mysterious fate of the French mariner had for seamen, until doubts were finally set at rest in 1827, when one of the East India Company's ships, under Captain Dillon, found at Manicolo, in the New Hebrides, traces of the wreckage of the vessels of La Perouse. Native tradition enabled the history of the end of the expedition to be ascertained. The French ships, on a dark and stormy night, were both driven on the reef, and soon pounded to match-wood. A few of the sailors got ashore, but most were drowned; and the bulk of the remainder were lost in an unsuccessful attempt to make for civilised regions from the coral isolation of Manicolo. A monument to the memory of the gallant La Perouse, on the coast a few miles from Sydney, now fronts the Pacific whose winds wafted him to his doom, and beneath whose waters he found his grave.

The next link in the chain was furnished by the expedition commanded by Bruni Dentrecasteaux, who, while the hurricane of the Revolution was raging, was despatched (1791) to search for La Perouse. He made important discoveries on his own account,* (* Voyage de Dentrecasteaux, redige par M. de Rossel, Paris 1808; Labillardiere, Relation du Voyage a la Recherche de la Perouse, Paris 1800.) both on the mainland of Australia and in Tasmania; and though he found no trace of his predecessor, his own name is honourably remembered among the eminent navigators who did original work in Australasia. It was Dentrecasteaux's hydrographer, Beautemps Beaupre, whose charting of part of the southern coast of Australia was so highly praised by Flinders.

The expeditions thus enumerated were all despatched before the era of Napoleon, and appreciation of their objects cannot therefore be complicated by doubts as to his Machiavellian designs. Bougainville's voyage, and that of Marion-Dufresne, were promoted under Louis XV, that of La Perouse under Louis XVI, and Dentrecasteaux's under the Revolutionary Assembly. Each was an expedition of discovery.

Next came the expedition commanded by Nicolas Baudin, with which we are mainly concerned, and which was despatched under the Consulate. It will presently be demonstrated that it did not differ in purpose from its predecessors, and that there is nothing to show that in authorising it Bonaparte had any other object than that professed. But before pursuing that subject, let it be made clear that French exploring expeditions to the South Seas were continued after the final overthrow of the Empire.

In 1817, while Napoleon was mewed up in St. Helena, and a Bourbon once more occupied the throne of France as Louis XVIII, the ships Uranie and Physicienne were sent out under the command of Captain Louis de Freycinet, the cartographer of Baudin's expedition.* (* Voyage autour du Monde, entrepris par ordre du Roi, par Louis de Freycinet, Paris 1827.) They visited some of the scenes of former French exploits, and Freycinet took advantage of his position on the west coast to pull down and appropriate for the French Academy of Inscriptions the oldest memorial of European presence in Australia. That is to say, he took the plate put up by the Dutchman Vlaming in 1697, in place of that erected in 1616 by Dirk Haticks on the island bearing the name of "Dirk Hartog," to commemorate his visit in the ship Eendraght of Amsterdam.* (* Ibid 1 449.) Freycinet had desired to take the plate when he was an officer on Le Naturaliste in July 1801, but Captain Hamelin, the commander, would not permit it to be disturbed. On the contrary, he set up a new post with the plate affixed to it, and expressed the opinion that to remove an interesting memorial that for over a century had been spared by nature and by man, would be to commit a kind of sacrilege.* (* "Il eut pense commettre un sacrilege en gardant a son bord cette plaque respectee pendant pres de deux siecles par la nature et par les hommes qui pouvoient avant nous l'avoir observee." Peron, Voyage de Decouvertes 1 195.) Freycinet was not so scrupulous.

Again, in 1824, the Baron de Bougainville, a son of the older navigator, and who as a junior officer had sailed with Baudin, took out the ships Thetis and Esperance on a voyage to the South Seas, for purely geographical purposes;* (* Journal de la Navigation autour du monde de la fregate La Thetis et de la corvette L'Esperance, pendant les annees 1824-1826; publie par ordre du Roi. Par M. le Baron de Bougainville.) and still later, in 1826 to 1828, during the reign of Charles X, Dumont d'Urville, in the Astrolabe, did valuable exploratory work, especially in the Western Pacific.* (* Voyage de la corvette L'Astrolabe, execute par ordre du Roi, pendant les annees 1826-1829, sous le commandement de M. J. Dumont D'Urville, Paris 1830.)

The whole of these expeditions, with the partial exception of that of Marion-Dufresne, were conducted in ships of the French navy, commanded by French officers, supported by French funds, and their official records were published at the expense of the French Government. A certain unity of purpose characterised them; and that purpose was as purely and truly directed to extend man's knowledge of the habitable earth as was that of any expedition that ever sailed under any flag.

To attempt, therefore, to isolate Baudin's expedition from the series to

which it rightly belongs, simply because it was undertaken while Bonaparte was at the head of the State, is to convey a false idea of it. If there were any evidence to show that it differed from the others in its aims, it would be quite proper to make it stand alone. But there is not.

Nor must it be supposed that this particular enterprise originated with the First Consul. It was not a scheme generated in his teeming brain, like the strategy of a campaign, or a masterstroke of diplomacy. It was placed before him for approval in the shape of a proposition from the Institute of France, a scientific body, concerned not with political machinations, but with the advancement of knowledge. The Institute considered that there was useful work to be done by a new expedition of discovery, and believed it to be its duty to submit a plan to the Government. We are so informed by Peron, and there is the best of reasons for believing him.* (* "L'honneur national et le progres des sciences parmi nous se reunissoient donc pour reclamer une expedition de decouvertes aux Terres Australes, et l'Institut de France crut devoir la proposer au gouvernement." Peron, Voyage de Decouvertes 1 4.) The history of the voyage was published after Napoleon had become Emperor, under his sanction, at the Imperial Press. If his had been the originating mind, it is quite certain that credit for the idea would not have been claimed for others. On the contrary, we should probably have had an adulatory paragraph from Peron's pen about the beneficence of the Imperial will as exercised in the cause of science.

Quite apart from Peron's statement, however, there are three official declarations to the like effect. First there is the announcement in the Moniteur* (* 23rd Floreal, Revolutionary Year 8; "L'Institut national a demande au premier consul, et a obtenu.) that it was the Institute which requested Bonaparte to sanction the expedition. Secondly, when Vice-Admiral Rosily reported to the Minister of Marine on Freycinet's charts in 1813,* (* Moniteur, January 15, 1813.) he commenced by observing that the expedition "had for its object the completion of the knowledge of the coasts of New Holland which were not hitherto entirely known." Thirdly, Henri de Freycinet, writing in 1808,* (* Ibid July 2, 1808.) said that it was the high interest stimulated by the voyages of La Perouse and Dentrecasteaux that made the Institute eagerly desirous of a new enterprise devoted to the reconnaissance of Australia. The last two statements were, it will be observed, published by Napoleon's official organ when the Empire was at its height.

There is no positive evidence as to what members of the Institute were chiefly instrumental in formulating the proposal for Napoleon's consideration. We do not know whether leading members explained their scheme to him orally, or laid before him a written statement. If there was a plan in manuscript, the text of it has never been published.* (* "Probably it was suppressed or destroyed," says Dr. Holland Rose (Life of Napoleon 1 379). But why should it have been? There is no reason to suppose that it contained anything which it was to anybody's interest to destroy or suppress. Indeed, it is by no means clear that there was such a document. It is quite likely that the scheme of the Institute was explained verbally to the First Consul. Why manufacture mysteries?) There

is only one document relating to the expedition in the collected correspondence of Napoleon;* (* Edition of 1861.) and that concerned an incident to which reference will be made in the next chapter. The reason for the absence of letters concerning the matter among Napoleon's papers is presumably that he left the carrying out of the project to the Institute; for he was not wont to restrain his directing hand in affairs in which he was personally concerned.

But there were two leading members of the Institute who had already concerned themselves with Australasian discovery, and who may safely be assumed to have taken the initiative in this matter. They were Bougainville the explorer, who had commanded the expedition of 1766 to 1771, and Charles Pierre Claret de Fleurieu, who had been Minister of Marine in 1790, and had written a book on the Decouvertes des Francais dans le sud-est de la Nouvelle Guinee (Paris, 1790), in which he maintained the prior claims of the French navigators Bougainville and Surville to discoveries to which later English explorers had in ignorance given fresh names. Fleurieu had also intended to write the history of the voyages of La Perouse, but was prevented by pressure of official and other occupations, and handed the work over to Milet-Mureau.* (* Voyage de la Perouse, Preface 1 page 3.) He stood high in the esteem of Napoleon, was a counsellor of State during the Consulate, became intendant-general of the Emperor's household, governor of the palace of Versailles, senator, and comte. Both Fleurieu and Bougainville had abundant opportunities for explaining the utility of a fresh voyage of exploration to Napoleon.

It was, too, quite natural that these men should desire to promote a new French voyage of discovery. None knew better what might be hoped to be achieved. We are fairly safe in assuming that they moved the Institute to submit a proposition to the First Consul; and it is not improbable that they personally interviewed him on the subject.

Bonaparte, at any rate, received the proposal "with interest," and we learn from Peron* (* Voyage de Decouvertes 1 4.) that he definitely authorised the expedition at the very time when his army of reserve was about to move from Geneva to cross the Alps in that astonishing campaign which conduced, by swift, toilsome, and surprising manoeuvres, to the crushing victory of Marengo. The plan of the Institute was therefore ratified in May 1800. The Austrians at that time were holding French arms severely in check in Savoy and northern Italy. Suchet, Massena, Oudinot, and Soult were, with fluctuating fortunes but always with stubborn valour, clinging desperately to their positions or yielding ground to superior strength, awaiting with confidence the hour when the supreme master would strike the shattering blow that, while relieving the pressure on them, would completely change the aspect of the war. It was while pondering his masterstroke, and deliberating on the choice of the path across the Alps that was to lead to it, that Bonaparte gave his approval; while elaborating a scheme to overwhelm the armies of Austria in an abyss of carnage, that he expressed the wish that, as the expedition would come in contact with ignorant savages, care should be taken to make it appear that the French met them as "friends and benefactors."

It may here be parenthetically remarked that it does not make us think more favourably of Freycinet that when, in 1824, he issued a new edition of the Voyage de Decouvertes, he omitted all Peron's references to Napoleon's interest in the expedition, and his direction that when savages were met the French should appear among them "comme des amis et des bienfaiteurs."* (* Peron, 1 10.) While Peron tells us that this laudable wish was personally expressed by the First Consul, Freycinet* (* 1 74, in the 1824 edition.) altered the phrase to "le gouvernement voulut," etc. He had absolutely no justification for doing so. The reader of the second edition of the book had a right to expect that he was in possession of the original text, save for the correction of incidental errors. But in 1824 Napoleon was dead, a Bourbon reigned in France, and Freycinet was the servant of the monarchy to which he owed the command of the expedition of 1817. The suppression of Napoleon's name and the record of his actions from Peron's text, was a puerile piece of servility.

There is nothing surprising in Bonaparte's cordial approval of the enterprise. One has only to study the volumes in which M. Frederic Masson has collected the papers and memoranda relating to Napoleon's youth and early manhood to realise how intensely keen was his interest in geography and travel. In one of those interesting works is a document occupying eight printed pages, in which Napoleon had summarised a geographical textbook, with a view to the more perfect mastery of its contents.* (* See Masson's Napoleon Inconnu; Papiers Inedits; Paris 1895 volume 2 page 44. The text-book was that of Lacroix.) It is curious to note how little the young scholar was able to ascertain about Australasia from the volume from which he learnt the elements of that science for which, with his genius for strategy and tactics, he must have had an instinctive taste. "La Nouvelle Guinee, la Carpentarie, la Nouvelle Hollande," etc., figure in his notes as the countries forming the principal part of the southern hemisphere now grouped under the denomination of Australasia; "la Carpentarie" thus signalised as a separated land being simply the northern region of Australia proper, the farthest limit of which is Cape York.* (* Mallet's Description de l'Univers (Frankfort 1686) mentions "Carpenterie" as being near the "Terre des Papous," and as discovered by the Dutch captain, Carpenter.)

It is not a little interesting, that when, in April 1800, twenty sculptors were commissioned to execute as many busts of great men to adorn the Galerie des Consuls, the only Englishmen among the honoured score were Marlborough and Dampier.* (* Aulard, Paris sous le Consulat 1 267.) It is curious to find the adventurous ex-buccaneer in such noble company as that of Cicero, Cato, Caesar, Demosthenes, Frederick the Great, and George Washington, but the fact that he was among the selected heroes may be taken as another evidence of Bonaparte's interest in the men who helped to find out what the world was like. Perhaps if somebody had seen him reading Dampier's Voyages, as he read Cook's on the way to Egypt, that fact would have been instanced as another proof, not of his fondness for extremely fascinating literature, but of the nourishment of a secret passion to seize the coasts which Dampier explored.

Napoleon had been a good and a diligent student. The fascinating but

hateful characteristics of his later career, when he was the Emperor with a heart petrified and corroded by ambition, the conqueror ever greedy of fresh conquest, the scourge of nations and the tyrant of kings, too often make one overlook the liberal instincts of his earlier years. His passion for knowledge was profound, and he was the pronounced friend of every genuine man of science, of every movement having for its object the acquisition and diffusion of fresh enlightenment. It is an English writer* (* Merz, History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century 1 152 to 154.) who says of him that he was, "amongst the great heroes and statesmen of his age, the first and foremost if not the only one, who seemed thoroughly to realise the part which science was destined to play in the immediate future"; and the same author adds that "some of the glory of Laplace and Cuvier falls upon Napoleon." He took pleasure in the company and conversation of men of science; and never more so than during the period of the Consulate. Thibaudeau's memoirs show him dining one night with Laplace, Monge, and Berthollet; and the English translator of that delightful book* (* Dr. Fortescue, page 273. Compare also Lord Rosebery, Napoleon, the Last Phase page 234: "In the first period of his Consulate he was an almost ideal ruler. He was firm, sagacious, far-seeing, energetic, just.") emphasises the contrast between the "just and noble sanity of the First Consul of 1802 and the delirium of the Emperor of 1812." The failure to keep that difference in mind--to recognise that the Bonaparte of the early Consulate was capable of exalted ideals for the general well-being that were foreign to the Napoleon of ten years later--is fruitful of mistakes in interpreting his activities. On April 8 he attended a seance of the Institute, and was there instrumental in reconciling several persons who had become estranged through events which occurred during the Revolution.* (* Aulard, Paris sous le Consulat, 1 252.) He was therefore on good terms with this learned body, and was himself a member of that division of it which was devoted to the physical and mathematical sciences.* (* Thibaudeau (English edition) page 112.)

It was quite natural, then, that when the national representatives of scientific thought in France approached him with a proposition that was calculated to make his era illustrious by a grand voyage of exploration which should complete man's knowledge of the great continents, the First Consul gave a ready consent.

The task of preparing instructions for the voyage was entrusted to a Committee of the Institute, consisting of Fleurieu, Bougainville, Laplace, Lacepede, Cuvier, Jussieu, Lelievre, Langles, and Camus; whilst Degerando wrote a special memorandum upon the methods to be followed in the observation of savage peoples--the latter probably in consequence of the First Consul's particular direction on this subject. It was an admirably chosen body for formulating a programme of scientific research. A great astronomer, two eminent biologists, a famous botanist, a practical navigator, a geographer, all men of distinction among European savants, and two of them, Laplace and Cuvier, among the greatest men of science of modern times, were scholars who knew what might be expected to be gained for knowledge, and where and how the most fruitful results might be obtained.

In their instructions, the committee directed attention to the south coast of Tasmania--by that time known to be an island, since the discoveries of Bass and Flinders, and their circumnavigation, had been the subject of much comment in Europe--as offering a good field for geographical research. They indicated the advisableness of exploring the eastern coast of the island, of traversing Bass Strait with a view to a more complete examination than appeared to the Institute to have been made up to that time, and of pursuing the southern coasts of Australia as far as the western point of Dentrecasteaux's investigations, especially with the object of searching that part of the land "where there is supposed to be a strait communicating with the Gulf of Carpentaria, and which, consequently, would divide New Holland into two large and almost equal islands." So much accomplished, the expedition was to pay particular attention to the coasts westward of the Swan River, since the old navigators who had determined their contour had necessarily had to work with imperfect instruments. The vessels were then to make a fuller exploration of the western and northern shores than had hitherto been achieved, to attack the south-west of Papua (New Guinea), and to investigate the Gulf of Carpentaria. No instructions seem to have been given relative to a further examination of the eastern coasts of the continent. Cook's work there was evidently thought to be sufficient, though Flinders found several
fresh and important harbours. The programme, as Peron pointed out, involved the exploration in detail of several thousands of miles of coasts hitherto quite unknown or imperfectly known, and its proper performance was calculated to accomplish highly important work in perfecting a knowledge of the geography of the southern hemisphere.

The French Government fitted out the expedition in a lavish and elaborate fashion.* (* "Les savans ont vu avec le plus grand interet les soins que le gouvernement a pris pour rendre ce voyage utile a l'histoire naturelle et a la connaissance des moeurs des sauvages." Moniteur, 22nd Fructidor.) Funds were not stinted, and the commander was given unlimited credit to obtain anything that he required at any port of call. The best scientific instruments were procured, and the stores of the great naval depot of Havre were thrown open for the equipment of the ships with every necessity and comfort for a long voyage. Luxuries were not spared; "in a word," says Peron, "the Government had ordered that nothing whatever should be omitted that could assure the preservation of health, promote the work of the staff, and guarantee the independence of the expedition."

Two vessels lying in the port of Havre were selected. The principal one, which was named Le Geographe, was a corvette of 30 guns, 450 tons, drawing fifteen or sixteen feet of water, a fast sailer, but, in Peron's opinion, not so good a boat for the purpose as her consort. Flinders described her as a "heavy-looking ship." The second vessel, named Le Naturaliste, was a strong, lumbering store-ship, very slow, but solid. She was a "grosse gabare," as one French writer described her.* (* Dr. Holland Rose (Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era page 139) heightens the effect of his argument by stating that Bonaparte "sent out men-of-war to survey the south coast of Australia for a settlement." It may be true that, strictly speaking, the ships were "men-of-war," inasmuch as they were ships of the navy. But the reader would hardly derive the

impression, from the words quoted, that they were vessels utterly unwarlike in equipment, manning, and command. As will presently be seen, they were very soon loaded up with scientific specimens. Nor is there any warrant for the statement that the expedition was instructed to "survey the south coast of Australia for a settlement." There was nothing about settlement in the instructions, which were not, as the passage would lead the reader to infer, confined to the south coast.)

The staff was selected with great care, special examinations being prescribed for the younger naval officers. A large company of artists, men of science, and gardeners accompanied the expedition for the collection of specimens, the making of charts and drawings, and the systematic observation of phenomena. There were two astronomers, two hydrographers, three botanists, five zoologists, two mineralogists, five artists, and five gardeners. Probably no exploring expedition to the South Seas before this time had set out with such a large equipment of selected, talented men for scientific and artistic work. The whole staff--nautical, scientific, and artistic--on the two ships consisted of sixty-one persons, of whom only twenty-nine returned to France after sharing the fatigues and distress of the whole voyage. Seven died, twenty had to be put ashore on account of serious illness, and five left the expedition for other causes.

The great German traveller and savant, Alexander von Humboldt, was in Paris while preparations were being made for the despatch of the expedition; and, being at that time desirous of pursuing scientific investigations in distant regions, he obtained permission to embark, with the instruments he had collected, in one of Baudin’s vessels. He confessed, however, that he had "but little confidence in the personal character of Captain Baudin," chiefly on account of the dissatisfaction he had given to the Court of Vienna in regard to a previous voyage.* (* Humboldt’s Personal Narrative of Travels, translated by H.M. Williams, London 1814 volume 1 pages 6 to 8.) Humboldt’s testimony is interesting, inasmuch as, if it be reliable--and, as he was in close touch with leading French men of science, there is no reason to disbelieve him--the original intention was to make the voyage more extensive in scope, and different in the route followed, than was afterwards determined. "The first plan," he wrote, "was great, bold, and worthy of being executed by a more enlightened commander. The purpose of the expedition was to visit the Spanish possessions of South America, from the mouth of the River Plata to the kingdom of Quito and the isthmus of Panama. After traversing the archipelago of the great ocean, and exploring the coasts of New Holland from Van Diemen’s Land to that of Nuyts, both vessels were to stop at Madagascar, and return by the Cape of Good Hope." Concerning the reasons why he was not ultimately taken, Humboldt was not accurately informed. "The war which broke out in Germany and Italy," he wrote, "determined the French Government to withdraw the funds granted for their voyage of discovery, and adjourn it to an indefinite period." Such was not the case. The funds were not withdrawn; the expedition was not adjourned. But Humboldt was a German, and the Institute very naturally desired that French savants should do the work which was to be sustained by French funds. There would probably be the less inclination to employ Humboldt, as he reserved to himself "the liberty of leaving Captain

Baudin whenever I thought proper." He believed himself to be "cruelly deceived in my hopes, seeing the plans which I had been forming during many years of my life overthrown in a single day." But in view of his confessed dislike of the commander, it does not seem that, on this ground alone, it would have been good policy to enrol him as a member of the staff, when there were French men of science eager for appointment.

The chief naturalist and future historian of the expedition, Francois Peron, was twenty-five years of age when he was commissioned to join Le Geographe. Born at Cerilly (Allier) in 1775, he was left fatherless at an early age; but he was a bright, promising scholar, and the cure of his native place took him into his house with the object of educating him for the priesthood. But "seduced by the principles of liberty which served as pretext for the Revolution, inflamed by patriotism, his spirit exalted by his reading of ancient history," as a biographer, Deleuze, wrote, he left the peaceful home of the village priest, and shouldered a musket under the tricolour. He fought in the army of the Rhine, and in an engagement against the Prussians at Kaiserslautern, was wounded and taken prisoner. Always a student, he spent the little money that he had on the purchase of books, which he devoted all his time to reading. He was exchanged in 1794, and returned to France.

His short soldiering career had cost him his right eye; but this deprivation really determined the vocation for which his genius especially fitted him. The Minister of the Interior gave him admission to the school of medicine at Paris, where, in addition to pursuing the prescribed course, he applied himself with enthusiasm to the study of biology* (* The word "biology" was not used till Lamarck employed it in 1801 to cover all the sciences concerned with living matter; but we are so accustomed to it nowadays, that it is the most convenient word to use to describe the group of studies to which Peron applied himself.) and comparative anatomy at the Museum. He was industrious, keen, methodical, and, above all, possessed of that valuable quality of imagination which, discreetly harnessed to the use of the scientific intellect, enables a student to see through his facts, and to read their vital meaning. The expedition to the South Seas had already been fitted out, and Baudin’s ships were lying at Havre awaiting sailing orders from the Minister of Marine, when Peron sought employment as an additional biologist. The staff was by that time complete; but Peron addressed himself to Jussieu, pressing his request with such ardour, and explaining his well-considered plans with such clearness, that the eminent botanist was unable to listen to him "sans etonnement et sans emotion."

Peron was very anxious to travel, not only for the sake of the scientific work which he might do, but also to find relief for his feelings, depressed by the disappointment of a love affair. Mademoiselle was unkind--because the lover was poor, his biographer says; but we must not forget that he was also one-eyed. Many ladies prefer a man with two.

Jussieu conferred with Lacepede the biologist, and the two agreed that it would be advantageous to permit this enthusiastic young student to make the voyage. Peron was encouraged to write a paper to be read before the Institute, expounding his views. He did so, taking as his principal theme

the desirableness of having with the expedition a naturalist especially charged with researches in anthropology. The Institute was convinced; the Minister of Marine was moved; Peron was appointed. He consulted with Cuvier, Lacepede, and Degerando as to a programme of work, procured the necessary apparatus, went to Cerilly to embrace his sisters and receive his mother’s benediction, and joined Le Geographe just before she sailed.* (* The facts concerning Peron’s early career are taken from Deleuze’s memoir, 1811, and that of Maurice Girard, 1857.)

The command of the expedition was entrusted to Captain Nicolas Baudin. He was fifty years of age when he received this commission, on the nomination of the Institute. In his youth he had been engaged in the French mercantile marine. In later years he had commanded two expeditions, despatched under the Austrian flag, for botanical purposes. From the last of these he returned in 1797, when, his country being at war with Austria, he presented the complete collection of animals and plants obtained to the French nation.* (* The Moniteur, 25th Prairial (June 13), 1797.) This timely act won him the friendship of Jussieu, and it was largely through his influence that "Citoyen" Baudin was chosen to command the expedition to the Terres Australes.* (* The Moniteur, 23rd Floreal (May 13), 1800.) He had had no training in the Navy, though if, as some suppose, the expedition had a secret aggressive mission, we may reasonably conjecture that it would have been placed under the command of a naval officer with some amount of fighting experience.

That Baudin did not become popular with the staff under his command is apparent from the studious omission of his name from the volumes of Peron and Freycinet, and from their resentful references to "notre chef." They wrote not a single commendatory word about him throughout the book, and they expressed no syllable of regret when he died in the course of the voyage.

Sometimes we may judge of a man’s reputation among his contemporaries by an anecdote, even when we doubt its truth; for men do not usually tell stories that disparage the capacity of those whom they respect. An amusing if venomous story about Baudin was told by the author of a narrative of one of the botanical voyages.* (* See the Naval Chronicle volume 14 page 103. The writer referred to was Bory de Saint-Vincent, who wrote the Voyage dans les quatre principales iles des mers d’Afrique, Paris 1804.) He related, on the alleged authority of an officer, that, being in want of a magnetic needle to replace one belonging to a compass which had been injured, he applied to the commodore, who had several in a drawer in his cabin. Baudin found one, but as it was somewhat rusty, the officer feared that the magnetic properties of the steel would be impaired. Baudin expressed his regret, and said: "Everything has been furnished by the Government in the most niggardly fashion; if they had followed my advice we should have been provided with silver needles instead of steel ones!"

Whether or not we believe that a naval commander could be so ignorant of magnetism, it is certain that Baudin did not enforce the laws of health on his ships. Sufficient has been said in the first chapter to show so much. The Consular Government gave unlimited scope for the proper

provisioning of the vessels, and yet we find officers and men in a wretched condition, the water insufficient, and the food supplies in utter decay, before the expedition reached Port Jackson. It must be added, however--even out of its proper place, lest an unduly harsh impression of Baudin's character should be conveyed--that he seems to have made an excellent impression upon the English in Sydney. Governor King treated him as a friend; and the letter of farewell that he wrote on his departure was such a delicate specimen of grace and courtesy, that one would feel that only a gentleman could have written it, were there not too many instances to show that elegant manners and language towards strangers are not incompatible with the rough and inconsiderate treatment of subordinates.

CHAPTER 8. EXODUS OF THE EXPEDITION.

The passports from the English Government.
Sailing of the expedition.
French interest in it.
The case of Ah Sam.
Baudin's obstinacy.
Short supplies.
The French ships on the Western Australian coast.
The Ile Lucas and its name.
Refreshment at Timor.
The English frigate Virginia.
Baudin sails south.
Shortage of water.
The French in Tasmania.
Peron among the aboriginals.
The savage and the boat.
Among native women.
A question of colour.
Separation of the ships by storm.
Baudin sails through Bass Strait, and meets Flinders.
Scurvy.
Great storms and intense suffering.
Le Geographe at Port Jackson.

England and France were at war when, in June 1800, application was made to the British Admiralty for passports for the French discovery ships. Earlier in that year the Government of the Republic sent to London Louis Guillaume Otto, a diplomatist of experience and tried discretion, to arrange for the exchange of prisoners of war; and it was Otto, whose tact and probity won him the esteem of King George's advisers, who conducted the preliminary negotiations which led up to the Treaty of Amiens. Earl Spencer was First Lord of the Admiralty--in Pitt's administration (1783 to 1801)--when the application was made.

The Quarterly Review of August 1810 (volume 4 page 42) fell into a singular error in blaming Addington's administration for the issue of the passports. Pitt's ministry did not fall till March 1801; and the censure which the reviewer levelled at the "good-natured minister," Earl St.

Vincent, who was Addington's First Lord of the Admiralty, for entertaining the French application, was therefore undeserved by him. "A few months after the retirement of Mr. Pitt from office and the succession of Mr. Addington, that is to say, in June 1800," are the opening words of the Quarterly article--an extraordinary blunder for a contemporary to make. The Quarterly was, of course, bitterly adverse to Addington's administration, in politics; but though party bias is responsible for strange behaviour, we shall be safe in attributing to lapse of memory this censure of a minister for the act of his predecessor. St. Vincent was in active service, as Admiral in command of the Channel Fleet, when the passports were issued.

It cannot be assumed that Spencer would have complied with such a request from a nation with which his country was at war, had he not been satisfied that the expedition was what it professed to be, one for discovery and scientific research. The passports granted guaranteed to Le Geographe and Le Naturaliste protection from hostile attack from British ships, and bespoke for them a favourable reception in any British port out of Europe where they might have to seek shelter.

The Admiralty was in later years severely blamed for compliance. Circumstances that have been narrated in previous pages generated the suspicion that the real purpose of the expedition was "to ascertain the real state of New Holland, to discover what our colonists were doing, and what was left for the French to do, on this great continent in the event of a peace, to find some port in the neighbourhood of our settlements which should be to them what Pondicherry was to Hindustan, to rear the standard of Bonaparte on the first convenient spot."* (* Quarterly Review 4 43. There can be no doubt that this Quarterly article had a great influence in formulating the idea which has been current for nearly a century regarding Napoleon's deep designs. Paterson's History of New South Wales (1811) repeated portions of the article almost verbally, but without quotation marks (see Preface page 5), and many later writers have fed upon its leading themes, without submitting them to examination.) The fact that this sweeping condemnation was made in a powerful organ of opinion bitterly hostile to the administration which it meant to attack, would minimise its importance for us, a century later, were it not that more recent writers have adopted the same assumption. To accept it, we have not merely to disregard the total absence of evidence, but to believe that Spencer was befooled and that Otto deceived him. The application was, it was urged, "grounded on false pretences," and the passports were "fraudulently obtained." It would have been a piece of audacity of quite superb coolness for the French diplomatist to ask for British protection for ships on ostensible grounds of research, had their secret purpose been exactly opposite to the profession; and the British Minister would have been guilty of grave dereliction of duty had he not assured himself that Otto's representations were reliable.

The letter of instructions furnished by the Duke of Portland, Secretary of State in Pitt's administration, to Grant, the commander of the Lady Nelson, in February 1800, may be quoted as laying down the principle observed by Great Britain in regard to an enemy's ships commissioned purely for discovery. "As vessels fitted out for this purpose," wrote the

Duke, "have always been respected by the nations of Europe, notwithstanding actual hostilities may at the time have existed between them, and as this country has always manifested the greatest attention to other nations on similar occasions, as you will observe by the letters written in favour of vessels employed in discovery by France and Spain, copies of which you receive enclosed, I have no apprehension whatever of your suffering any hindrance or molestation from the ships of other nations should you fall in with them...You are also, on pain of His Majesty's utmost displeasure, to refrain on your part from making prizes, or from detaining or molesting the ships of any other nation, although they may be at war with His Majesty."* (* Historical Records of New South Wales 4 57.)

It was on this enlightened principle that the British Government furnished passports to Baudin's ships; but the Admiralty also took steps to prevent the laurels of important discovery being won by foreign efforts. Flinders returned home in the Reliance in August, vigorous, eager for fresh work, and already, notwithstanding his youth, honourably regarded by naval men as an intrepid and skilful navigator. Lord Spencer, the head of a family eminently distinguished for the great administrators whom it has furnished for the furtherance of British polity, did a far wiser thing than attempting to block French researches, from suspicion, jealousy, or fear of consequences. He entertained the suggestion of Sir Joseph Banks, ordered the fitting out of the Investigator, and placed her under the command of the one man in the Navy who knew what discovery work there was to do, and how to accomplish it speedily. Pitt's consummate judgment in the selection of men for crucial work has often been eulogised, and never too warmly; but one can hardly over-praise the sagacity of Pitt's colleague at the Admiralty, who especially commended Nelson as the officer to checkmate Bonaparte in the Mediterranean in 1798,* (* See Mahan's Life of Nelson (1899 edition) page 275.) and, on the more pacific side of naval activity, commissioned Matthew Flinders to complete the discovery of Australia in 1800.

Baudin's expedition was ready to sail from Havre at the end of September, but was delayed by contrary winds. The delay was considered by a friendly contemporary to be fortunate, in that it enabled the officers and scientific staff to become friendly, so that the most perfect harmony existed amongst them.* (* Moniteur, 29th Vendemiaire, Revolutionary Year 8 (1800).) French readers of the official organ of the Government were also assured that everybody on the two ships had merited confidence in the talent of the chiefs; in which case their disappointment with later developments must have been all the more profound. The public and the journals took a lively interest in the enterprise; and the author of one of the world's great stories, Bernardin de Saint Pierre, from his experience of tropical life in the island where Paul and Virginia lived and loved, lectured at the Institute on the dietetic regime which ought to be observed by Captain Baudin and his men.* (* Moniteur, 16th Vendemiaire.) But however valuable his advice may have been, it was sadly disregarded.

A livelier function was a banquet given to Baudin at the Hotel de la Rochefoucauld, in Paris, on the 7th Fructidor, by the Societe de

l’Afrique Interieure. It was attended by several leading members of the Institute, and an account of it was accorded over a column of space in the Moniteur.* (* 22nd Fructidor.) Baudin was seated between Bougainville and Vaillant, an African traveller. There was music, and song, and a long toast list, with many eloquent speeches. Baudin submitted the toast of Bonaparte, "First Consul of the French Republic and protector of the expedition"; Jussieu proposed the progress of the sciences; the company drank to the "amelioration of the lot of savage races, and may their civilisation result from the visit which the French are about to pay to them"; and the immortal memory of La Perouse was honoured in silence. The last toast appropriately expressed the wish that the whole company might reassemble in the same place on the return of the expedition, "inspired by the purest zeal for the progress of the sciences and of enlightenment." A short poem was also recited, which it is worth while to rescue from the inaccessibility of the Moniteur file:--

"Vous quittez aujourd’hui la France
Mais vous emportez tous nos voeux,
Et deja vos succes heureux
Partout sont applaudis d’avance.

Sur le coeur de tous les mortels
Votre gloire a jamais se fonde,
Il n’est pas de pays au monde
Ou le savoir n’ait des autels."

The poet who thus applauded success in advance, probably lived long enough to realise that it is much easier to make fair verses than a true prediction.

There was another banquet at Havre while the ships were awaiting a fair wind, when again high hopes were expressed concerning the results to be achieved by the expedition, and where one of the toasts was proposed by a Chinese, Ah Sam, who had been found on board a captured English frigate, and was, by Bonaparte’s orders, being taken by Baudin to Mauritius, whence he was to be shipped to his own country. Ah Sam’s toast descended from ethereal altitudes and took a purely personal view of the situation. He drank "Aux Francais, bons amis d’A Sam."* (* Moniteur, 21st Vendemiaire.) The Chinaman had reason to be grateful, for the First Consul had, by an order over his own signature, directed that he should be placed under Baudin’s charge, and conveyed to his own country at the expense of the Government, and that there should be shown to him that consideration which he merited, both because he was a stranger and because of his good conduct while residing within the territories of the Republic.* (* Correspondence of Napoleon, 1861 collection Volume 6, letter dated 7th Vendemiaire, Revolutionary Year 9 (September 29, 1800).) The treatment of Ah Sam was an example of that kindness which Napoleon, ruthless in war, so often displayed towards those who touched his sympathies.* (* Peron mentioned Ah Sam’s case (1 11), but Freycinet, in his second edition, cut out the paragraph, in pursuance of his policy of suppressing references to Napoleon; Peron having written that the Chinaman had reason to bless the generosity and goodness of the First Consul. It was not politic in 1824 to talk about Napoleon’s generosity

and goodness. But how paltry was the spirit thus displayed!)

The expedition sailed from Havre on the morning of October 19, 1800, amidst cordial popular demonstrations from the inhabitants of that bustling seaport, and many wishes that fortune might crown the efforts of the explorers with success. The captain of the English frigate Proselite, which was watching the harbour mouth, scrutinised the passports and permitted the ships to pass; and, with a fair wind to fill his sails, Baudin put out into the Channel and steered for the open ocean, bound due south.

Peron, in his history of the voyage, severely blamed the obstinacy of "notre chef"--mention of his name being carefully avoided--for the delay occasioned on the run down to the Cape of Good Hope. Captain Baudin, disregarding the advice of his officers, insisted on sailing fairly close to the African coast, instead of making a more westerly course. He argued, according to Peron, that the route which he favoured was nearer, and as a matter of mileage he was right. But winds and currents should have been considered rather than bare distance; and the simple result of bad seamanship was that Baudin’s vessels occupied one hundred and forty-five days on the voyage from Havre to Mauritius, where they stayed to refit, whilst Flinders brought out the Investigator from Spithead the whole way to Cape Leeuwin, where he first made the Australian coast, in one hundred and forty-two days. The French vessels lay at Mauritius for the leisurely space of forty days, and did not reach Australia till May 27, two hundred and twenty days after their departure from France.

Even then, had reasonable diligence been exercised in the pursuit of the exploratory work for which his ships had been commissioned, Baudin would have had the honour of discovering the unknown southern coast; for Flinders was not allowed to leave England till July 17, 1801, fifty-one days after the French actually arrived on the shores of Australia. The prize of discovery slipped from Baudin’s reach in consequence of his "dawdling" methods, which brought about those "consequences facheuses et irreparables" deplored by the naturalist.

Soon after the expedition left Mauritius, the officers and crew were surprised to learn that the supplies of bread were short "and that for the future ships’ biscuit and salt meat would constitute the principal part of the diet. The wine brought from France had also been nearly consumed. Instead of the latter, a cheap, unwholesome drink, tafia, bought at the island, was to be served out. This was amazing and depressing news, considering the lavishness with which the Government had fitted out the ships, and that nearly six weeks had been spent at a French colonial possession. By this time, too, as is clear from Peron’s narrative, very little affection for the commander remained. The delays already permitted had brought the expedition in face of the prospect of exploring the southern coasts of New Holland in the winter season. Baudin considered it unwise to undertake the work in Tasmanian seas, according to the programme prepared for him, during months when severe storms would probably be encountered; and he consequently determined not to sail farther south on making Cape Leeuwin, but to explore the western coasts of the continent, reserving the work which the Institute had put first to

be done in the following spring. Peron blamed him for this decision, inasmuch as the course prescribed in the instructions was the result of careful thought and extensive research. But though the procrastination which had let slip the months best suited for exploration in southern waters was caused by Baudin's own lack of energy and knowledge, his resolve not to entrust his ships on an unknown coast, where he knew of no secure harbours, in the months of tempest and cold, was prudent.

On making the Leeuwin, therefore, Baudin steered north. Geography Bay and Cape Naturaliste, upon current maps, mark the commencement of his work on the shores of Western Australia. From Sharks Bay the vessels pursued the course of the first Englishman to explore any portion of the Australian coast, the resolute, observant, tough old salt, William Dampier. The biographical dictionary was here for the first time brought forth, and the names within it were scattered liberally over the lands traversed. Some of them have adhered, though Baudin's voyage along these shores was by no means one of discovery, and there is clear evidence that names were applied to parts which his ships did not investigate with any approach to care. The Golfe Joseph Bonaparte of the large French chart, if traced with some degree of particularity, would have led to several highly important discoveries. But it was not carefully investigated at all, and thus Baudin totally missed Bathurst Island and Melville Island, which together stretch for over one hundred miles across the entrance to Van Diemen's Gulf. Instead of definiteness of outline, the French charts presented the world with a bristling array of names affixed to contours which were cloudy and ill-defined, incomplete and inaccurate.

The most serious omission of all was the superb natural harbour of Port Darwin, the finest anchorage in northern Australia. The French missed it altogether. Yet here also they peppered their chart of the neighbouring coasts with the names of their notable countrymen, as though they had explored the environs meticulously. Baudin certainly lost a fine opportunity of doing good original work in north-western Australia; and had his real object been to find a suitable site for French settlement, his research would have been amply rewarded had he found the port which now bears the noble name of the greatest modern man of science. There is, however, one French name which should not escape mention, since it serves to remind us that Peron was writing his book at the time when, amidst the smoke and flame and thunder of Trafalgar, two fleets locked in fierce conflict were deciding momentous issues. Off the very broken coast of what is now the Kimberley division of Western Australia, the French styled a small cluster of rocky islets the Isles d'Arcole; and one of these was named Ile Lucas, "in honour of the captain of the vessel which, in the combat of the Redoutable against the Victory, has lately attained so much honour."* (* Peron, Voyage de Decouvertes 1 136.) The English reader will scarcely need to be reminded that it was by a shot from the mizzen top of the Redoutable in that immortal fight that Nelson received his death wound; and thus, by giving his name to a desolate rock, was it sought to honour the captain of the ship that had accounted for the death of a nation's hero. The French charting was so inferior that it is scarcely possible to identify the Ile Lucas, which is not marked at all on the large Carte Generale, probably because that was finished before Trafalgar was fought; though the passage in Peron's book is somewhat

valuable as showing that the pepper-box sprinkling of names along coasts explored with less sufficiency than pretentiousness was not entirely Baudin's work. The commander of the expedition died before Trafalgar was fought, so that, as on other grounds we have reason to infer, he was less responsible for the nomenclature than Freycinet made it appear when that feature of the work became somewhat discreditable.

Scurvy broke out on Le Geographe while the voyage along the western and north-western coasts was in progress. Water, too, was becoming scarce, and there seemed to be little opportunity of replenishing the supply on these barren shores. The ship had likewise become separated from her consort, Le Naturaliste, "owing to the false calculations of the chief charged with directing their common movements," as averred by Freycinet. Baudin decided to sail to the Dutch possession at Timor, where he might be able to re-victual, take in fresh water, and enable his crew to recover from their disease, which was fast reducing them to helplessness. He therefore discontinued the further exploration of the north-west coast, and, on August 18, entered Kupang.

There Le Naturaliste also appeared rather more than a month later, and the two ships remained in the Dutch port till November 13, Baudin's vessel having thus been at anchor fifty-six days. There was no hurrying.

In the month of October an English frigate, the Virginia, suddenly made her appearance in the offing, with her decks cleared for action. Her captain had heard of two French vessels being at Kupang, and, supposing them to be lawful prize of war, he had clapped on all sail and descended on the quiet little port with the joyful anticipation of finding brisk business to do. But when he was informed that the two were exploring ships, and had examined their passports, the English commander gallantly expressed "his especial esteem and consideration for the object of our voyage"; and, hearing that Captain Baudin was ill, even offered a present of excellent wine. It was a shining, graceful little incident, pleasant to read about in a story in which there is a surfeit of discontent, disease, and bad feeling. The frigate, having satisfied herself that there was no fighting to enjoy, made off without firing a shot.

After the long sojourn at Timor, it might have been expected that when the expedition sailed for the south of Tasmania, the ships would be in a clean and wholesome condition, the crews and staff in good health, and the supplies of food and water abundant. But distressing fortunes followed in Baudin's wake at every stage of the voyage. Leaving Kupang on November 13, the vessels were only six days' sail from that port when insufficiency of water led to revolting practices, described by Peron. "We were so oppressed by the heat," he says, "and our ration of water was so meagre, that unhappy sailors were seen drinking their urine. All the representations of the ship's doctor with a view of increasing for the time being the quantity of water supplied, and diminishing the ration when cooler latitudes were reached, were useless."* (* Peron, 1824 edition 2 7.) It is not wonderful that scurvy broke out again with increased virulence.

It is more pleasant to turn to the somewhat prolonged stay made in

southern Tasmania. At this time, it should be recollected, there was no European settlement on the beautiful and fertile island which then bore the name of the old Dutch governor of Java, Anthony Van Diemen. Indeed, it was only so recently as 1798 that Flinders and Bass, in the Norfolk, had demonstrated that it really was an island, by sailing round it. On previous charts, principally founded on that of Cook--the map attached to the history of Bougainville's voyage (1771) is particularly interesting--it had been represented as a long projection from the mainland, shaped like a pig's snout. Not only Abel Tasman, the discoverer (1642), but the French explorers, Marion-Dufresne (1772) and Dentrecasteaux (1791), and the English navigators, Cook, Furneaux, Cox, and Bligh, had visited it.* (* See Backhouse Walker, Early Tasmania, published by the Royal Society of Tasmania, Hobart 1902.) But as yet the European had merely landed for fresh water, or had explored the south coast very slightly as a matter of curiosity, and the aboriginal race was still in unchallenged possession. Had Baudin been furnished with instructions to look for a place for French settlement, very little diligence and perspicacity would have enabled him to fix upon a spot suitable to the point of perfection before the English at Port Jackson knew of his whereabouts in these seas at all. He might have planted the tricolour under the shadow of Mount Wellington, on the site of Hobart, and furnished it from his ships with the requisites for endurance till he could speed to the Isle of France and bring out the means of establishing a stable settlement. But though the geographical work done in this region was important and of good quality--Freycinet being on the spot--it does not appear that any investigations were made beyond those natural to a scientific expedition, and certainly no steps were taken by Baudin to assert possessive rights. Yet there was no part of Australia as to which the French could have made out stronger claims on moral grounds; for though the voyage of the first French navigator who landed in Tasmania was one hundred and thirty years later than Abel Tasman's discovery, still it was a solid fact that both Marion-Dufresne and Dentrecasteaux had contributed more than any other Europeans had done to a knowledge of what Tasmania was, until Flinders and Bass in their dancing little 25 ton sloop put an end to mystery and misconception, and placed the charming island fairly for what it was on the map of the world.

Baudin's ships rounded South-East Cape on January 13 (1802), and sailed up Dentrecasteaux Channel into Port Cygnet. Peron found plenty to interest him in the fauna of this strange land, and above all in the aboriginals with whom he was able to come in contact. His chapters on the three months' stay in southern and eastern Tasmania are full of pleasant passages, for the naturalist had a pretty talent for descriptive writing, was pleased with the novel things he saw, and communicated his pleasure to his pages. Though he lacked the large grasp, the fertile suggestiveness, of great scientific travellers like Humboldt, Darwin, and Alfred Russel Wallace, he was curious, well informed, industrious, and sympathetic; and as he was the first trained anthropologist to enter into personal relations with the Tasmanian blacks--a race now become extinct under the shrivelling touch of European civilisation--his writings concerning them have great value, quite apart from the pleasure with which they may be read. A couple of pages describing Peron's first meeting with the aboriginals when out looking for water, and the

amazement of the savages on encountering the whites--an incident given with delightful humour, and at the same time showing close and careful observation--will be likely to be welcomed by the reader.

"In pursuing our route we came to a little cove, at the bottom of which appeared a pretty valley, which seemed to offer the prospect of finding sweet water. That consideration decided M. H. Freycinet to land there. We had scarcely put foot upon the shore, when two natives made their appearance upon the peak of a neighbouring hill. In response to the signs of friendship that we made to them, one of them leapt, rather than climbed, from the height of the rock, and was in the midst of us in the twinkling of an eye. He was a young man of from twenty-two to twenty-four years of age, of generally strong build, having no other physical fault than the extreme slenderness of legs and arms that is characteristic of his race. His face had nothing ferocious or forbidding about its expression; his eyes were lively and intelligent, and his manner expressed at once good feeling and surprise. M. Freycinet having embraced him, I did the same; but from the air of indifference with which he received this evidence of our interest, it was easy to perceive that this kind of reception had no signification for him. What appeared to affect him more, was the whiteness of our skin. Wishing to assure himself, doubtless, if our bodies were the same colour all over, he lifted up successively our waistcoats and our shirts; and his astonishment manifested itself in loud cries of surprise, and above all in an extremely rapid stamping of the feet.

"But our boat appeared to interest him even more than our persons; and after he had examined us for some minutes, he sprang into it. There, without troubling himself at all about the sailors whom he found in it, he appeared as if absorbed in his examination of the novelty. The thickness of the planks, the curves, the rudder, the oars, the masts, the sails--all these he observed with that silent and profound attention which are the unquestionable signs of a deep interest and a reflective admiration. just then, one of the boatmen, wishing doubtless to increase his surprise, handed him a glass bottle filled with the arack which formed part of the provisions of our search party. The shining of the glass at first evoked a cry of astonishment from the savage, who took the bottle and examined it for some moments. But soon, his curiosity returning to the boat, he threw the bottle into the sea, without appearing to have any other intention than that of getting rid of an object to which he was indifferent; and at once resumed his examination. Neither the cries of the sailor, who was concerned with the loss of the bottle of arack, nor the promptness of one of his comrades to jump into the water to recover it, appeared to concern him. He made various attempts to push the boat free, but the mooring-rope which held it fast making his efforts futile, he was constrained to abandon them, and returned to us, after having given us the most striking example we had ever had of attention and reflection among savage peoples."

Presently the companion of the young aboriginal came down the hill and joined the group. He was an older man, about fifty years of age, grey-bearded and grey-headed, with a frank and open countenance. He also was permitted to satisfy himself that the Frenchmen were white-bodied as

well as white-faced; and being assured that there was nothing to fear from these strange visitors, he signalled to two black women, who had remained hidden during the earlier part of the interview. One was a gin of forty, the second aged about twenty-six; both were naked. The younger woman carried a black baby girl in a kangaroo skin, and Peron was pleased to observe the affectionate care she showed for her child. A surprise as great as that which the young male black had shown concerning the boat, was manifested by the younger woman in a pair of gloves. The weather being cold, a fire was lit, when one of the sailors, approaching it to warm himself, took off a pair of fur gloves which he was wearing. "The young woman, at the sight of that action, gave forth such a loud cry that we were at first alarmed; but we were not long in recognising the cause of her fright. We saw, from her expressions and gestures, that she had taken the gloves for real hands, or at least for a kind of living skin, that could be taken off, put in the pocket, and put on again at will. We laughed much at that singular error; but we were not so much amused at what the old man did a little later with a bottle of arack. As it contained a great part of our drink, we were compelled to take it from him, which he resented so much that he went off with his family, in spite of all I could do to detain them longer."

At Bruni Island, Peron and a party of his compatriots had an adventure with a party of twenty native women. He did not find them charming. All were in the condition in which Actaeon saw Diana, when "all undrest the shining goddess stood," though they did not, when discovered, glow with:

"such blushes as adorn
The ruddy welkin or the purple morn."

Indeed, they appeared to be quite unaware that there was anything remarkable about their deficiency of clothing. "A naked Duke of Windlestraw addressing a naked House of Lords" might have shocked them, but not merely because he was naked. They were greatly interested when, as a sign of friendliness, one of the Frenchmen, the doctor of Le Naturaliste, began to sing a song. The women squatted around, in attitudes "bizarres et pittoresques," applauding with loud cries. They were not, however, a group of ladies for whom the Frenchmen had any admiration to spare. Their black skins smeared with fish oil, their short, coarse, black hair, and their general form and features, were repulsive. Two or three young girls of fifteen or sixteen years of age the naturalist excepted from his generally ungallant expressions of disgust. They were agreeably formed, and their expression struck him as being more engaging, soft, and affectionate, "as if the better qualities of the soul should be, even amidst hordes of savages, the peculiar appanage of youth, grace, and beauty." Peron remarked that nearly all the older women were marked with wounds, "sad results of bad treatment by their ferocious spouses," for the black was wont to temper affection with discipline, and to emphasise his arguments with a club.

If the black gins gave no satisfaction to the aesthetic sense of the naturalist, his white skin appeared to be no less displeasing to them; and one of them made a kindly effort to colour him to her fancy. She was one of the younger women, and had been regarding him with perhaps the

thought that he was not beyond the scope of art, though Nature had offended in making his tint so pale. Rouge, says Mr. Meredith, is "a form of practical adoration of the genuine." Charcoal was this lady's substitute for rouge. A face, to please her, should be black; and, with a compassionate desire to improve on one of Nature's bad jobs, she set to work. She approached Peron, took up some charred sticks, rubbed them in her hand, and then made advances to apply the black powder to his face. He gravely submitted--in the sacred cause of science, it may be supposed--and one of his colleagues was favoured with similar treatment. "Haply, for I am black," he might have exclaimed with Othello after the treatment; and the makers of charcoal complexions were charmed with their handiwork. "We appeared then to be a great subject of admiration for these women; they seemed to regard us with a tender satisfaction," wrote Peron; and the reflection occurred to him "that the white European skin of which our race is so proud is really a defect, a sort of deformity, which must in these distant climates give place to the hue of charcoal, dull red ochre, or clay." Bonaparte would not have concurred; for he, as Thibaudeau tells us, emphatically told his Council of State, "I am for the white race because I am a white man myself; that is an argument quite good enough for me." It was hardly an argument at all; but it sufficed.

The expedition encountered extremely bad weather along the eastern coast of Tasmania; where, also, Captain Baudin was too ill to superintend the navigation in person. He shut himself up in his cabin, and left the ship to his lieutenant, Henri de Freycinet. Le Naturaliste was separated from her consort during a furious gale which raged on March 7 and 8, and the two vessels did not meet again till both reached Port Jackson. While making for Bass Strait, Le Geographe fell in with a small vessel engaged in catching seals, with whose captain the French had some converse. He told them that the British Government had sent out special instructions to Port Jackson that, should the French exploring ships put in there, they were to be received "with all the regard due to the nature of their mission, and to the dignity of the nation to which they belonged"* (* Peron, 1824 edition 2 175.)--surely a noble piece of courtesy from the Government of a people with whom the French were then at war. It was this intimation, there can be no doubt, that a month later determined Baudin to go to Sydney, for Captain Hamelin of Le Naturaliste was not aware of his intention to do so, as will appear from the following chapter. Bass Strait was entered on March 27, and the ship followed the southern coast of Australia until the meeting with Flinders in Encounter Bay, as described in the earlier part of this book.

By this time, as has been related, scurvy was wreaking frightful havoc among the crew. Before the Encounter Bay incident occurred, the French sailors had expressed so much disgust with their putrid meat, weevilly biscuit, and stinking water, that some of them threw their rations overboard, even in the presence of the captain, preferring to endure the pangs of hunger rather than eat such revolting food. After Baudin had made those investigations which his means permitted in the region of the two large gulfs, the winter season was again approaching, when high winds and tempestuous seas might be anticipated. It was therefore hoped by all on board that when the commandant decided to steer for the shelter and succour of Port Jackson, he would, as it was only sensible that he

should, take the short route through Bass Strait. In view of the distressed state of his company, it was positively cruel to think of doing otherwise. But there was, it seems, a peculiar vein of perversity in Baudin's character, which made him prone to do that which everybody wished him not to do. We may disregard many of the disparaging sentences in which Peron refers to "notre commandant"--never by name--because Peron so evidently detested Baudin that he is a doubtful witness in matters of conduct and character. We must also give due weight to the fact that we have no statement of Baudin's point of view on any matter for which he was blamed by colleagues who were at enmity with him. But even so, we have his unquestionable actions upon which to form a judgment; and it is difficult to characterise by any milder term than stupidity his determination to sail to Port Jackson from Kangaroo Island round by the south of Tasmania, a route at least six hundred miles out of his straight path. That he came to this decision after having himself sailed through Bass Strait from east to west, and thus learnt that the navigation was free from difficulty; when he had in his possession the charts of Bass and Flinders showing a clear course; during a period of storms when he would be quite certain to encounter worse weather by sailing farther south; when his crew were positively rotting with the scorbutic pestilence that made life all but intolerable to them, and attendance upon them almost too loathsome for endurance by the ship's surgeon; and when his supplies were at starvation limit in point of quantity and vermin-riddled in respect of quality that he resolved to take the long, stormy, southern route in face of these considerations, seems hardly to admit of explanation or excuse. "A resolution so singular spread consternation on board," wrote Peron; and it is not wonderful that it did. The consequence was that the voyage to Port Jackson made a story of privations pitiful to read. The bare fact that it took Baudin from May 8 to June 20, forty-three days, to sail from Kangaroo Island to Sydney, whilst Flinders in the Investigator, despite contrary winds, covered the distance by the Bass Strait route in thirty days (April 9 to May 9), including several days spent at King Island and Port Phillip, is sufficient to show how much Baudin's obtuse temper contributed to aggravate the distress of his people.

Peron described the weather during the voyage southward as "frightful."

"And now the storm blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'er-taking wings,
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roar'd the blast,
And southward aye we fled."

Torrents of very cold rain fell, furious squalls lashed the sea to a boil, thick fogs obscured the atmosphere; and the ship had to be worked by men "covered with sores and putrid ulcers, each day seeing the number

of the sick augmented." There was a short rest in Adventure Bay, Bruni Island, for the purpose of procuring fresh water on May 20, and when the order to sail again was given, the crew were so much enfeebled by disease that it took them four hours to weigh the anchor. On the east coast more storms came to harass the unfortunate men. A paragraph in Peron's own terms will convey a sufficient sense of the agony endured on the stricken ship.

"On June 2 and 3 the weather became very bad. Showers of rain succeeded each other incessantly, and squalls blew with a violence that we had never experienced before. On the 4th, during the whole day, the weather was so frightful that, accustomed as we had become to the fury of tempests, this last made us forget all that had preceded. Never before had the squalls followed each other with such rapidity; never had the billows been so tumultuous. Our ship, smitten by them, at every instant seemed about to break asunder under the shock of the impact. In the twinkling of an eye our foremast snapped and fell overboard, and all the barricading that we had erected to break the force of the wind was smashed. Even our anchors were lifted from the catheads despite the strength of the ropes which held them. It was necessary to make them more secure, and the ten men, who were all that were left us to work the ship, were engaged in this work during a great part of the day. During the night the tempest was prolonged by furious gales. The rain fell in torrents; the sea rose even higher; and enormous waves swept over our decks. The black darkness did not permit the simplest work to be done without extreme difficulty, and the whole of the interior of the vessel was flooded by sea-water. Four men were compelled to enter the hospital, leaving only six in a condition to carry out the orders of the officer on the bridge, and these unfortunates themselves dropped from sheer exhaustion and fatigue. Between decks, the sick men lay about, and the air was filled with their groans. A picture more harrowing never presented itself to the imagination. The general consternation added to the horror of it. We had nearly reached the point of being unable to control the movements of the ship amidst the fury of the waves; parts of the rigging were broken with every manoeuvre; and despite all our efforts we could scarcely shift our sails. For a long time our commandant had had no rest. It was absolutely necessary to get out of these stormy seas at the extremity of the southern continent, and hasten on our course for Port Jackson. 'At this time,' says the commandant in his journal, and the fact was only too true, 'I had not more than four men in a fit condition to remain on duty, including the officer in charge.' The ravages of the scurvy can be estimated from these words. Not a soul among us was exempt from the disease; even the animals we had on board were afflicted by it; some, including two rabbits and a monkey, had died from it."

Slowly, painfully, as though the ship herself were diseased, like the miserable company on board, the coast was traversed, until at last, on June 20, Le Geographe stood off Port Jackson heads. Even then, with the harbour of refuge in sight, the crew were so paralysed by their affliction that they were positively unable to work her into port.* (* An astonishing statement indeed, but here are Peron's words: "Depuis plusieurs jours, nous nous trouvions par le travers du port Jackson sans pouvoir, a cause de la faiblesse de nos matelots, executer les manoeuvres

necessaires pour y entrer.") But the fact that a ship in distress was outside the heads was reported to Governor King, who was expecting Le Geographe to arrive, and who had doubtless learnt that there was scurvy aboard from Flinders, whose quick eye would not have failed to perceive some trace of the sad state of affairs when he boarded the vessel in Encounter Bay. Accordingly King sent out a boat's crew of robust blue-jackets from the Investigator; and Peron records with what trembling joy the afflicted Frenchmen saw the boat approaching on that June morning. Soon the British tars climbed aboard, sails were trimmed, the tiller was grasped by a strong hand, a brisk British officer took charge, and the ship was brought through the blue waters of Port Jackson, where, in Neutral Bay, her anchor was dropped.

It is not overstating the case to say that Le Geographe was snatched from utter destruction by the prompt kindness of the British governor. A slight prolongation of the voyage would have rendered her as helpless as if peopled by a phantom crew; and she must have been blown before the wind until dashed to fragments on the rocks on some uninhabited part of the coast. The extremity of abject powerlessness had unquestionably been reached when the wide entrance to Port Jackson could not be negotiated.

Peron regarded the dreadful condition of the vessel as furnishing a great and terrible lesson to navigators. "These misfortunes," he wrote, "had no other cause than the neglect of our chief of the most indispensable precautions relative to the health of the men. He neglected the orders of the Government in that regard; he neglected the instructions which had been furnished to him in Europe; he imposed, at all stages of the voyage, the most horrible privations upon his crew and his sick people." The naturalist concluded his doleful chapter of horrors by quoting the words of the British navigator, Vancouver, who was one of Cook's officers on his third voyage: "It is to the inestimable progress of naval hygiene that the English owe, in great part, the high rank that they hold to-day among the nations." He might also have quoted, had he been aware of it, an excellent saying of Nelson's: "It is easier for an officer to keep men healthy than for a physician to cure them."

CHAPTER 9. PORT JACKSON AND KING ISLAND.

Le Naturaliste at Sydney.
Boullanger's boat party.
Curious conduct of Baudin.
Le Naturaliste sails for Mauritius, but returns to Port Jackson.
Re-union of Baudin's ships.
Hospitality of Governor King.
Peron's impressions of the British settlement.
Morand, the banknote forger.
Baudin shows his charts and instructions to King.
Departure of the French ships.
Rumours as to their objects.
King's prompt action.
The Cumberland sent after them.
Acting Lieutenant Robbins at King Island.

The flag incident.
Baudin’s letters to King.
His protestations.
Views on colonisation.
Le Naturaliste sails for Europe.

Le Naturaliste had been unable to rejoin her consort after the tempest of March 7 and 8. She being a slow sailer, the risk of the two vessels parting company was constant, and as there had already been one separation, before the sojourn at Timor, Baudin should have appointed a rendezvous. But he had neither taken this simple precaution, nor had he even intimated to Captain Hamelin the route that he intended to pursue. When, therefore, the storm abated, the commander of the second ship neither knew where to look for Le Geographe, nor had he any certain information to enable him to follow her.

Before making up his mind as to what he should do, Captain Hamelin had the good luck to pick up an open boat containing Boullanger, one of the scientific staff of Le Geographe, a lieutenant, and eight sailors. They were absent from the ship when the storm burst, and Baudin had sailed away without them. His conduct on this occasion had been inexplicable. Boullanger and his party had gone out in the boat to chart a part of the coast with more detail than was possible from the deck of the corvette. But they had not been away more than a quarter of an hour, according to Peron, when Baudin, "without any apparent reason," bore off the coast. Then came the tempest, night fell, the following days were too stormy for putting off another boat to search for the missing men; and in the end, Baudin left them to their fate. They had no chart or compass, merely enough food and water to last for a day, and were abandoned on an uninhabited coast, in an open boat, in bitterly cold, squally weather, with the rain falling in sheets at frequent intervals. Here again, British kindness saved the Frenchmen. Before having the good fortune to perceive the sails of Le Naturaliste, the starved, drenched, and miserable men had attracted the attention of a sealing brig, the Snow-Harrington, from Sydney. Her skipper, Campbell, took them on board, supplied them with warm food, and offered to convey them to Port Jackson forthwith. They remained on the Snow-Harrington for the night, but on the following morning sighted Le Naturaliste, and, after profusely thanking Captain Campbell for his generosity, soon picked her up.

Hamelin, having no instructions as to where he should go, resolved to devote himself to work in Bass Strait. Eight days were spent in Westernport, the limit of Bass’s discoveries in January 1798; and the name French Island preserves the memory of their researches there. They found the soil fertile, the vegetation abundant, the timber plentiful; the port was, they considered, "one of the most beautiful that it would be possible to find, and it unites all the advantages which will make it some day a precious possession."

But the supplies on board Le Naturaliste were becoming exhausted, and, being still without news of his chief, Hamelin decided to sail for Port Jackson. He arrived there on April 24. As far as he knew, however, the war between England and France still raged. News of the Treaty of Amiens

was not received at Sydney till the middle of June. He was therefore gravely concerned about the reception that would be accorded him. He had his passport, which protected him from molestation, but he feared that the British would "at least refuse him succour," of which he was desperately in need. Evidently the Snow-Harrington had not communicated to him the same welcome news as the sealing craft had given to Baudin, concerning the instructions of King George's Government.

How different was his welcome from his anticipation! He found "nothing but sweet peace and gentle visitation." "The English received him, from the first instant, with that great and cordial generosity which the perfection of European civilisation can alone explain, and which it alone can produce. The most distinguished houses in the colony were thrown open to our companions, and during the entire length of their sojourn, they experienced that delicate and affectionate hospitality, which honours equally those who bestow and those who receive it." So Peron testified; but one cannot transcribe his words without a reflection on the sort of "European hospitality" that Matthew Flinders received by way of contrast when he was compelled to seek, shelter in Mauritius.

Le Naturaliste was lying at anchor when Flinders' arrived with the Investigator in May. Learning from him of the meeting with Le Geographe in Encounter Bay in the previous month, and inferring that Baudin would sail for Mauritius after finishing what he had to do on the southern coast, Hamelin determined also to make his way to the French colony. He left Sydney harbour on May 18, with the intention of rounding the southern extremity of Tasmania, and striking across the Indian Ocean from that point. But here again fearful storms were encountered. "The sea was horrible; the winds blew with fury and in squalls; torrents of rain fell incessantly"; and, increasing the misfortunes, the westerly winds were so strong at the time when the ship was endeavouring to turn westward, that no headway could be made. Hamelin's men were already on short rations, but even so the supplies would not suffice for a voyage to Mauritius, unless a fairly rapid passage could be made. The contrary winds, fogs, and storms of "the roaring forties" offered no such assurance; and the French captain, casting a "longing, lingering look behind" at the comforts and hospitalities of Port Jackson, determined to double back on his tracks. He re-traversed the east coast of Tasmania, and entered Port Jackson for the second time on July 3, to find that his chief and the leading ship of the expedition had been snugly berthed there during the past fortnight. "And so," Peron comments, "were united for the second time, and by the most inconceivable luck, two ships which, owing to the obstinacy of the commandant, had had no appointed rendezvous, and were twice forced to navigate independently at two periods of the voyage when it would have been most advantageous for them to act in concert."

As the two French vessels lay at Sydney for nearly six months, during which time the officers and men mingled freely with the population of the colony, whilst the naturalists and artists occupied themselves busily with the work of their special departments, the occurrences have a two-fold interest for one who wishes to appreciate the significance of Baudin's expedition. There is, first, the interest arising from the observations of so intelligent a foreign observer as Peron* was,

concerning the British colony within fifteen years after its foundation; and there is, secondly, the special interest pertaining to the reception and treatment of the expedition by the governing authorities, their suspicions as to its motives, and the consequences which arose therefrom. (* Curiously enough, there was another Peron who visited Port Jackson in a French ship in 1796, and gave an interesting account of it in a book which he wrote--Memoires du Capitaine Peron, two volumes Paris 1824. But the two men were not related. The nautical Captain Peron was born at Brest in 1769.)

Apart from Peron's writings, we have a considerable body of documentary material, in the form of letters and despatches, which must be considered. We cannot complain of an insufficiency of evidence. It covers the transactions with amplitude; it reveals purposes fully; the story is clear.

What Peron saw of the infant settlement filled him with amazement and admiration. "How could we fail to be surprised at the state of that interesting and flourishing colony," cried the naturalist. It was only so recently as January 26, 1788, that Captain Arthur Phillip had entered the commodious and beautiful harbour which is not eclipsed by any on the planet. Yet the French found there plentiful evidences of prosperity and comfort, and of that adaptable energy which lies at the root of all British success in colonisation. Master Thorne, in the sixteenth century, expressed the resolute spirit of that energy in a phrase: "There is no land uninhabitable, nor sea innavigable"; and in every part of the globe this British spirit has applied itself to many a land that looked hopeless at first, and has frequently found it to be one:

"whose rich feet are mines of gold,
Whose forehead knocks against the roof of stars."

We need hardly concern ourselves with Peron's survey of the administrative system, social factors, education, commerce, agriculture, fisheries,, finance, and political prospects, valuable as these are for the student of Australian history. Nor would it further our purpose to extract at length his views on the reformative efficacy of the convict system, as to which he was certainly over sanguine. The benevolent naturalist dealt with the convicts in the next paragraph but one from that in which he had described the growing wool trade; and it would almost seem that observations which he had intended to make relative to sheep and lambs had by chance strayed amongst the enthusiastic sentences in which he related how transportation humanised criminals. "All these unfortunates, lately the refuse and shame of their country, have become by the most inconceivable of metamorphoses, laborious cultivators, happy and peaceful citizens"; "nowhere does one hear of thieves and murderers"; "the most perfect security prevails throughout the colony"; "redoubtable brigands, who were so long the terror of the Government of their country, and were repulsed from the breast of European society, have, under happier influences, cast aside their anti-social manners"; and so forth. On this subject Peron is by no means a witness whom the sociologist can trust; though it should not escape notice that the generous temper in which he described what he saw of the convict system in operation, and

his view of it as a noble experiment in reformation, indicate his desire to appraise sympathetically the uses to which the British were putting their magnificent possessions in the South Seas.

Captain Baudin’s impressions of the young colony, contained in his letter to Jussieu,* (* Moniteur, 22nd Fructidor, Revolutionary Year 11. (September 9, 1803).) are also interesting, and may with advantage be quoted, as they appear to have escaped the attention of previous writers. "I could not regard without admiration," he wrote, "the immense work that the English have done during the twelve years that they have been established at Port Jackson. Although it is true that they commenced with large resources ["grands moyens"; but, indeed, they did not!] and incurred great expenditure, it is nevertheless difficult to conceive how they have so speedily attained to the state of splendour and comfort in which they now find themselves. It is true that Nature has done much for them in the beauty and security of the harbour upon which their principal establishment is erected; but the nature of the soil in the vicinity has compelled them to penetrate the interior of the country to find land suitable for the various crops which abundantly furnish them with the means of subsistence, and enable them to supply the wants of the European vessels which the fisheries and commerce attract to this port."

The French visitors were far more genial in their view of the affairs of the colony than many British writers have been. It was concerning this very period that Dr. Lang said that the population consisted, apart from convicts, "chiefly of those who sold rum and those who drank it."

The reader must not, however, be hurried away from the subject of the convict population without the pleasure of an introduction to a delightful rascal, under sentence for forgery, with whom Peron had an interview. The ironical humour of the passage will lighten a page; and the plausible character revealed in it might have escaped from a comedy of Moliere. Morand was his name, and his crime--"son seul crime," wrote Peron in italics--was in having "wished to associate himself with the Bank of England without having an account there."

Morand shall be permitted to tell, in his own bland, ingenuous way, how, like a patriot, he tried to achieve financially what Bonaparte failed to do by military genius; and doubtless in after years he reflected that if his own efforts brought him to Sydney Cove, Napoleon’s landed him at St. Helena.

"The war," said Morand, "broke out between Great Britain and France; the forces of the two nations were grappling; but it appeared to me to be easier to destroy our rival by finance than by arms. I resolved, therefore, as a good patriot, to undertake that ruin, and to accomplish it in the very heart of London. If I had succeeded," he cried with enthusiasm, "France would have held me in the greatest honour; and instead of being branded as a brigand, I should have been proclaimed the avenger of my country. Scarcely had I arrived in England when I commenced my operations; and at first they succeeded beyond all my hopes. Assisted by an Irishman not less skilful than myself, and who, like me, was actuated by a noble patriotism, desiring even more fervently than I did

the downfall of England, I was soon enabled to counterfeit the notes of the Bank with such perfection that it was even difficult for us to distinguish those which came from our own press from the genuine paper. I was at the very point of a triumph; all my preparations were made for inundating England with our manufactured notes; nothing was wanting except some information in regard to numbering them--when my companion, whom up till then I had regarded as AN HONEST MAN,* (* The italics are Peron's.) took it into his head to steal some of the notes, which were as yet defective, inasmuch as they lacked a few trifling but indispensable formalities. He was arrested almost immediately; and as he had behaved dishonourably towards me, he did not hesitate to relapse into sin in another aspect. He revealed everything to the authorities; I was arrested and plunged into prison with him; all my instruments, all our bank notes, were seized--and Great Britain was saved from the ruin which I had prepared for her!

"Evident as were the proofs of our project, I did not despair, thanks to the nature of the criminal laws of England, of escaping death; but such were the feebleness and fright of my wretched partner, that I had no doubt of our common downfall if I were compelled to appear before the tribunals in association with that cowardly wretch. To obviate the aggravation of my own misfortunes, which could not have prevented his, I determined to endeavour to get rid of him; and, as the author of both our disasters, it was quite right that he should suffer. In a speech to him that was very pathetic, therefore, I tried to prove to him, that, our death being inevitable, we had nothing better to think about than how best to sustain the sadness and ignominy that had come upon us; and that, death for death, it was better to fall like men of honour than under the hand of the executioner. The Irishman was moved, but not yet resolved. I then made him feel that if his own infamy did not touch him, he ought at least to spare his children the disgrace of being pointed at as the offspring of one who had been hanged; and that, if he had not been able to leave them wealth, he should at least, by an act of generous devotion, save them from that shame.

"These last reflections inflamed the Irishman with a fine courage. We managed to procure a strong corrosive acid; I feigned to take some of it; but he took it really, and died; when, disembarrassed from that silly rascal, I avoided the gallows which assuredly awaited me had I been tried with him. I was, instead, sentenced to transportation to this colony, where I am condemned to pass the remainder of my days. But the period of my servitude in prison is now finished; I follow with advantage two of my early trades, those of goldsmith and clockmaker.* (* He was an emancipist; that is, a convict liberated from prison confinement on probation. His two "knaves" were also convicts. Transported men could often earn their liberty by exemplary behaviour. When Flinders went north in the Investigator, he was allowed to take nine convicts with him as part of his crew, on the promise that a good report from him would earn them their liberty; but that experiment was not a marked success. Morand, as I understand it, escaped the death penalty because the suicide of his companion prevented his being tried for conspiracy. The punishment for forgery was transportation.) The two knaves who work for me increase my profits threefold. In a few years I shall be one of the wealthiest

proprietors in the colony; and I should be one of the happiest if I were not constantly tormented with regret at having so unfortunately failed in an honourable enterprise, and at being regarded on that account as a vile criminal, even by those among you, my compatriots, who cannot know the noble principles [sic "nobles principes"!] which actuated my conduct, or who cannot appreciate them."

As the good Peron does not mention discovering that his pockets had been picked after his interview with this choice and humorous rogue, it will be agreed that he escaped from the interview with singular good fortune.

The naturalist presented a lively picture of the port of Sydney, which even in those very early days was becoming a place of consequence. There were ships from the Thames and the Shannon, brought out to engage in whaling, which was an important industry then and for many years after; ships from China; ships laden with coal bound for India and the Cape; ships engaged in the Bass Strait sealing trade; ships which pursued a profitable but risky business in contraband with the Spanish South American colonies; ships fitting out for the North American fur trade; ships destined for enterprises among the South Sea Islands; and, lastly, there was the ship of "the intrepid M. Flinders" getting ready to continue the navigations of that explorer in northern and north-western Australia. "All this ensemble of great operations, all these movements of vessels, give to these shores a character of importance and activity that we did not expect to meet with in regions so little known in Europe, and our interest redoubled with our admiration." Above all, one is glad to notice, Peron was interested in the boat in which George Bass had accomplished that "audacieuse navigation," the discovery of Bass Strait, in 1797 and 1798. It was, at the date of this visit to Sydney, preserved in the port with a sort of "religious respect," and small souvenirs made out of a portion of its keel were regarded as precious relics by those who possessed them. Governor King believed that he could not make a more honourable present to Baudin than a piece of the wood of the boat enclosed in a silver frame, upon which he had had engraved a short statement of the facts of Bass’s remarkable exploit.

Throughout the long stay made by Baudin’s vessels, the utmost kindness was shown to the whole company by the British. The governor himself, and the principal citizens, were hospitable; the scientists were permitted to go wherever they chose; and guides were provided for them on their inland excursions; and the scurvy-tortured sailors were attended by Dr. Thomson, the chief medical officer of the colony, with "the most touching activity." In addition to this, Governor King gave the French commandant unlimited credit to obtain whatever stores he needed, even supplying him with official requisition forms which he could fill up at his own pleasure; "and these schedules, without any other guarantee than the signature of the commandant, were accepted by all the inhabitants with the most entire confidence." The generosity of King in this respect was all the greater, in that the Government stores were for the time being short of requirements, and the governor had to reduce temporarily the rations of his own people in order to share with the French. The settlement was not yet self-supporting, and the delay of supply ships, through storms or other hindrances, meant "short commons" for all. At the

time of the arrival of the French, the stock of wheat was very low, because floods on the Hawkesbury had destroyed a large part of the harvest; and to meet the requirements of one hundred and seventy extra men taxed the resources of the administration somewhat severely.

But what King had to offer he gave with a graceful liberality. "Although you will not find abundant supplies of what are most acceptable to those coming off so long a voyage, yet I offer you a sincere welcome," he had written; and, happy as he was to be able to announce that news of the peace had been received on the day previous to Baudin's arrival--no doubt the vessel that brought the despatch reported to the governor that Le Geographe was near the heads--"yet the continuance of the war would have made no difference in my reception of your ships, and offering every relief and assistance in my power." Not only Baudin and Peron acknowledged gratefully the fine courtesy shown by the British, but other members of the expedition also expressed themselves as thankful for the consideration extended to them. Bailly the geologist made an excursion to the Hawkesbury and the mountains, in the interest of his own science, when boats, oarsmen, guide, interpreter, and everything were furnished by the Government, "our chief having refused us even the food necessary for the journey." No more could have been done for a British expedition.

Baudin obtained permission for his officers to erect their tents for the making of astronomical observations at the same place as had been appointed for the tents of Flinders' officers, one of whom, delegated for this service, was the young John Franklin. This proximity of men engaged in similar work seems to have extended friendly feelings amongst them. It was possibly on occasions of their meeting in this manner that Flinders showed his charts to Baudin to illustrate what the Investigator had already done; and it was after an examination of the drawings that Freycinet made a remark that reflected the regret of a keen officer for the procrastination that conduced to the failure of their own expedition in a geographical sense. "Ah, captain," said Freycinet, "if we had not been kept so long picking up shells and collecting butterflies at Van Diemen's Land, you would not have discovered the south coast before us."* (* Flinders, Voyage 1 190.) That was a mild statement of the case. If Baudin had applied himself to his task of exploration with diligence intelligently directed, he would have discovered the south coast before Flinders reached Australian waters. It was at this time, also, that the French officers learnt of the existence of Port Phillip, and probably obtained a copy of a chart of it.

The perfect friendliness prevailing during the whole period of the stay of the discovery ships was disturbed by only two incidents, neither of which is of surviving importance. One consisted of a charge against junior officers of having sold ashore rum which had been purchased, by permission of the governor, for use during the voyage. The case was investigated, the accusations broke down, and apologies were made to the officers affected. The second incident arose out of a misunderstanding of the French method of honouring the British flag on King George's birthday. It was an affair of no consequence, and a brief explanation soon put matters right. A British officer deemed the French mode of "dressing" their ships to be disrespectful, but Baudin was able to show

that what was done was in accordance with the regulations of his country's navy, which provided that "the place of honour for the flag of a foreign nation which we intend to distinguish, must be on the starboard of the main-yard arm." The fact that these two trivial incidents were the only recorded elements of misunderstanding during a period of nearly six months, at a time when animosities between English and French people--and especially sailors--were extraordinarily acute, testifies to the good manners of the French, the hospitable feeling of the English, and the pleasant temper of all parties.

Governor King, notwithstanding his benevolent disposition, was mindful of his responsibilities. Before a French sail was sighted he had been advised of the fact that Baudin's ships were to visit Australian waters, and it is quite clear that, in common with most of his contemporaries, he was very suspicious of Gallic designs. He was a naval officer himself, and British naval men at that period were pretty well unanimously of Nelson's opinion, when he wrote to Hugh Elliot, "I never trust a Corsican or a Frenchman; I would give the devil ALL the good ones to take the remainder." The arrival of Flinders in the Investigator on May 9, and his reports as to the presence of the French on the southern coast, made the governor wary and watchful; and on May 21 he wrote to the Duke of Portland suggesting the establishment of a colony at the newly discovered Port Phillip. "I am more solicitous respecting forming this settlement from the probability of the French having it in contemplation to make a settlement on the north-west coast, which I cannot help thinking is the principal object of their researches."* (* Historical Records of New South Wales. The north-west coast referred to is, of course, north-west Tasmania.) The letter exhibits the suspicion in King's mind, and his alertness to frustrate any attempt to threaten the interests and security of the colony under his charge by the planting of a foreign settlement in its neighbourhood.

But Captain Baudin was very frank. In his first letter to the governor, dated June 23, and written on the day after his arrival in port, he requested permission to remain for some time, "as we all want a little rest, having been at sea for nine consecutive months"; and he added the assurance that "I shall at the first interview it will be your pleasure to grant me, furnish you with all the information which may be of interest to you, concerning the expedition which I am making by order of the French Government."

Baudin kept his promise. He handed over to King his journals, "in which were contained all his orders from the first idea of his voyage taking place," and also the whole of the drawings made on the voyage.* (* King's letter to Banks, Historical Records of New South Wales 5 133.) The governor was able to examine these at his leisure, and that he made use of the opportunity is apparent from his brief summary of the orders. "His object was, by his orders, the collection of objects of natural history from this country at large, and the geography of Van Diemen's Land. The south and south-west coast, as well as the north and north-west coast, were his particular objects. It does not appear by his orders that he was at all instructed to touch here, which I do not think he intended if not obliged by distress." Evidently he did not, as was indicated by Hamelin's

resolve to go to Mauritius in May. King had to confess, after a perusal of the papers, that he was left with merely "general ideas" on the nature of the French visit to Van Diemen's Land. These, however, he communicated to Baudin, who "informed me that he knew of no idea that the French had of settling on any part or side of this continent."* (* King's letter to Banks, Historical Records of New South Wales 5 133.) It does not appear that the governor showed any of the French papers or charts to Flinders, whose statements in his book indicate that he had not seen them.

The governor, then, commenced his relations with the French commandant by being doubtful and vigilant; but frequent personal interviews, and an examination of the whole of the ships' orders, journals, and charts, convinced him that the suspicions were not justified, and that there were no designs, about which he need be concerned, behind the pacific professions of the voyagers. From this time forth Baudin and King met almost daily; and from the beginning to the end of the visit the governor had not the faintest reason for doubting the good faith of his guests. On July 11 he gave his authority for Baudin to purchase the little colonial-built Casuarina, with which to explore shallow waters, thus facilitating the pursuit of the objects of the expedition.

Baudin's letter of farewell was a worthy acknowledgment of the benefits he had received. On leaving the colony," he wrote, "I bequeath to the French nation the duty of offering to you the thanks which are due to you as governor for all you have done as well for ourselves as for the success of the expedition; but it is for me to assure you how valuable your friendship has been and will ever be to me...It will be a satisfaction for me to correspond with you from whatever country events may bring me to. It is, as you know, the only means which men who love and esteem one another can make use of, and it will be the one of which we shall reciprocally avail ourselves if, on your part, I have been able by my conduct to inspire you with the feelings which yours has inspired me with."* (* Historical Records 4 1006.) Baudin also wrote a general letter, addressed to the administrators of the French colonies of Mauritius and Reunion, setting forth the aids which Governor King had rendered to his people, and expressing the hope that if at any time a British ship whose commander carried a copy of the letter should be compelled to call at either island, it would be shown that the French were not less hospitable and benevolent.* (* Ibid 4 968.) Twelve signed copies of this letter* (* Ibid page 133.) were given to King, who, however, does not seem to have given one to Flinders when he sailed with the Cumberland. It is doubtful whether the possession of one would have made any difference in General Decaen's treatment of the English navigator, as he was quite well aware of the services rendered to Baudin's expedition by the British at Port Jackson. In fact, it is not known that King made any use of the document. A copy of it was found among his papers after his death.

It was not till after Le Geographe and Le Naturaliste had sailed away (November 18) that a piece of gossip came to King's ears that caused him uneasiness. According to the rumour, Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson, of the New South Wales corps, had stated that one of the French officers had told him that one of the purposes of the expedition was to fix upon a

site for a settlement in Van Diemen's Land. Paterson did not report this story to the governor, as it was his obvious duty to do were it true that he had been so informed. Had he reported it, King could have confronted Baudin with witnesses before his ships left the harbour. "I should have required a positive explanation from the French commodore, and would have taken a vessel up to have preceded any attempt of that kind they might have in contemplation."

King sent for Paterson, and questioned him as to what he had heard. His excuse for not personally communicating the story which he had allowed to drift to the governor's ears by chance, was that he thought that what he had heard must have come to King's knowledge also: a supine and almost flippant explanation of neglect in a matter which was serious if the allegations were true. He affirmed also that one of the French officers had pointed out to him on a chart the very place where they intended to settle. It was in what is now known as Frederick Henry Bay, in the south of Tasmania.* (* Backhouse Walker, Early Tasmania page 15.)

The governor took prompt action. He at once fitted out the armed schooner Cumberland--the vessel in which Flinders afterwards sailed to Mauritius--and placed her under the command of Acting-Lieutenant Robbins. She carried a company of seventeen persons in all, including the Surveyor-General, Charles Grimes; for Robbins was also instructed to take the schooner on to Port Phillip after finding the French, and to have a complete survey made.

Robbins was directed to ascertain where the French ships were; to hand to Baudin a letter, and to lay formal claim to the whole of Van Diemen's Land for the British Crown; to erect the British flag wherever he landed; and to sow seeds in anticipation of the needs of settlers, whom it was intended to send in the Porpoise at a later date. It was a bold move, for had Baudin's intentions been such as he was now suspected of entertaining, the one hundred and seventy men under his command would surely have had little difficulty in disposing of the handful whom young Robbins led.

But no assertion of force was necessary at all, and one can hardly read the letters and despatches bearing upon the incident without feeling that the proceedings fairly lent themselves to the ridicule which the nimble-witted French officers applied to them. Baudin and his people had not gone to Frederick Henry Bay; they had not planted the tricolour anywhere in Tasmania; they had not even called at any port in that island. Instead, they were discovered quietly charting, catching insects, and collecting plants at Sea Elephants Bay, on the east of King Island, which, it will be remembered, they had missed on the former part of their voyage.

But Acting-Lieutenant Robbins was young, and was surcharged with a sense of the great responsibility cast upon him. A more experienced officer, having delivered his message, might have waited quietly alongside the French until they finished their work, and then seen them politely "off the premises," so to speak; in which event Governor King's purpose would have been fully served and no offence would have been given. But instead

of that, after lying at anchor beside Le Geographe for six days, on friendly and even convivial terms with the French, Robbins landed with his army of seventeen stalwarts, fastened the British flag to a tree over the tents of the naturalists, had a volley fired by three marines--he was doing the thing in style--and, calling for three cheers, which were lustily given, formally asserted possession of King Island. There was no need to do anything of the kind, for the island had been discovered four years before, and was at this very time occupied by British people, who used it as the headquarters of the Bass Strait sealing industry.

Robbins' action, though strictly in accordance with the instructions given to him on the supposition that the French would be found in occupation of territory in Tasmania, was, in the circumstances, tactless to the point of rudeness, though it caused less indignation than amusement among them. It is to be noticed that the flag of the Republic had not been erected over the tents of the visitors, nor anywhere on the island. Otherwise, we may suppose, Acting-Lieutenant Robbins would have gone a step further and pulled it down; and what would have happened then we can but surmise.

Baudin was on his ship, which was anchored a little way off the shore, when the "hurrahs" of the assertive seventeen directed his attention to Robbins' solemn proceedings. In a private letter to King he described what had happened as a "childish ceremony," which had been made more ridiculous "from the manner in which the flag was placed, the head being downwards, and the attitude not very majestic. Having occasion to go on shore that day, I saw for myself what I am telling you. I thought at first it might have been a flag which had been used to strain water and then hung out to dry; but seeing an armed man walking about, I was informed of the ceremony which had taken place that morning."* (* Baudin to King, Historical Records 5 829.) He asserted that Petit, one of his artists, had made an amusing caricature of the ceremony, but that he, Baudin, had torn it up, and directed that it was not to be repeated.

The tone of Baudin's letters betrayed more annoyance than his language actually expressed; but assuming that his professions were true, it must be admitted that he had reason to feel offended. He had left Sydney on excellent terms with the governor, who had not only wished well to his undertaking, but had assisted in its prosecution by enabling the Casuarina to be purchased. He now found himself pursued by a youthful and exuberant officer, presented with a letter which suggested intentions that he had explicitly disavowed, and the British flag was virtually flapped in his face in a somewhat unmannerly fashion. King's letter to him explained the rumour which had led to the despatch of the Cumberland, and contained the following passage: "You will easily imagine that if any information of that kind had reached me before your departure, I should have requested an explanation; but as I knew nothing of it, and at present totally disbelieving anything of the kind ever being thought of, I consider it but proper to give you this information."

Baudin wrote two letters in reply, one officially, and the second, by far the more interesting document, a personal and friendly epistle. In the official answer he said: "The story you have heard, of which I suspect

Mr. Kemp, captain in the New South Wales corps, to be the author, is without foundation, nor do I believe that the officers and naturalists who are on board can have given cause for it by their conversation. But in any case you may rest well assured that if the French Government had ordered me to remain some days either in the north or south of Van Diemen's Land, discovered by Abel Tasman, I would have stopped there without keeping my intention secret from you." Baudin's additional statement that, prior to the flag incident, he had taken care to place in four prominent parts of the island "proofs sufficient to show the priority of our visit," must, however, have brought a smile to King's lips, and certainly makes one wonder what Baudin meant by "priority"; since King Island had previously been visited by Flinders, had been fully charted, and was the frequent resort of sealers. As a matter of fact, the Snow-Harrington, which had succoured Boullanger and his boat crew of abandoned Frenchmen in the previous March, had, after that fortunate meeting, stayed at the island ten weeks, when there were killed the enormous number of six hundred sea-elephants and four thousand three hundred seals.* (* Backhouse Walker, Early Tasmania page 21.) Besides, Baudin assured King that "I intend" that the island "shall continue to bear your name," forgetful that it would not have had a name already if his own visit had been "prior" to others.

The second, unofficial, letter which Baudin wrote to the governor repeated his positive assurances that the suspicions concerning his objects were without foundation, but on account of the personal regard which he entertained for King, he determined to tell him frankly his opinion regarding the forming of European settlements and the dispossessing of native peoples. The view expressed by him bears the impress of the "ideas of '89," ideas which laid stress on the rights of man and human equality, and professed for the backward races a special fraternal tenderness. "To my way of thinking," said the commodore, "I have never been able to conceive that there was any justice or equity on the part of Europeans, in seizing, in the name of their governments, a land for the first time, when it is inhabited by men who have not always deserved the title of savages, or cannibals, which has been given to them, while they were but children of nature, and just as little savages as are actually your Scotch Highlanders* (* Had Baudin been reading about the Sage of Lichfield? "Well, sir, God made Scotland." "Certainly," replied Dr. Johnson, "but we must always remember that he made it for Scotchmen; and comparisons are odious, Mr. Strahan, but God made Hell." Caledonian Societies, of which there are many in various parts of the world, will observe with gratitude Baudin's concession that Highlanders did not eat their fellowmen.) or our peasants of Brittany, who, if they do not eat their fellowmen, are nevertheless just as objectionable. From this it appears to me that it would be infinitely more glorious for your nation, as for mine, to mould for society the inhabitants of the respective countries over whom they have rights, instead of wishing to dispossess those who are so far removed by immediately seizing the soil which they own and which has given them birth. These remarks are no doubt impolitic, but at least reasonable from the facts; and had this principle been generally adopted you would not have been obliged to form a colony by means of men branded by the law, and who have become criminals through the fault of the Government which has neglected and abandoned them to

themselves. It follows, therefore, that not only have you to reproach yourselves with an injustice in seizing their lands, but also in transporting on a soil where the crimes and the diseases of Europeans were unknown, all that could retard the progress of civilisation, but which has served as a pretext to your Government. I have no knowledge of the claims which the French Government may have upon Van Diemen's Land, nor of its designs; but I think that its title will not be any better grounded than yours."

After this taste of Baudin's reflections, it is really a pity that we possess so little from his pen. Had he lived to be the historian of the expedition, his work would have been very different in character from that of Peron; though it is hardly likely that an elaboration of the views expressed in the personal letter to King would have been favoured with the imprint "de l'Imprimerie Imperiale." Peron's anthropological studies among Australian aboriginals led him to conclusions totally at variance with the nebulous "state of nature" theories of the time, which pictured the civilised being as a degenerate from man unspoiled by law, government, and convention. The tests and measurements of blacks which he made, and compared with those of French and English people, showed him that even physically the native was an inferior animal; his observations of ways of life in the wild Bush taught him that organised society, with all its restraints, was preferable to the supposed freedom of savagery; and he deduced the philosophical conclusion that the "state of nature" was in truth a state of subjection to pitiless forces, only endurable by beings who felt not the bondage because they knew of no more ennobled condition.* (* A more distinguished man was cured of his early Rousseauism by an acquaintance with peoples far higher in the scale of advancement than Australian aboriginals. "Up to sixteen years of age," said Napoleon in a scrap of conversation recorded by Roederer, "I would have fought for Rousseau against all the friends of Voltaire. Now it is the contrary. I have been especially disgusted with Rousseau since I have seen the East. Savage man is a dog.") Baudin carried away from his visits to the abodes of untutored races no truer notion than came from his own unsubstantiated sentiments, nourished by no contact with facts, but imbibed uncritically from the rhetorical rhapsodists of Rousseau's school. Crabbe summed them up in half a dozen lines:

"Tis the savage state
Is only good, and ours sophisticate!
See! the free creatures in their woods and plains,
Where without laws each happy monarch reigns,
King of himself--while we a number dread,
By slaves commanded and by dunces led."

Peron spoke of savage peoples, not with less sympathy but with a sympathy grounded on knowledge; and he wasted no words about the "injustice" of occupying lands which the aboriginal only used in the sense that lands are "used" by rabbits and dingoes. Peron's appreciation of well-observed facts gave him some political insight in the philosophical sense, and he comprehended the development of which the country was capable. Could Baudin's shade visit to-day the shores that he traversed more than a century ago, he would surely acknowledge that orchards of ripening fruit,

miles of golden grain, millions of white fleeces, the cattle of a thousand hills, great cities throbbing with immense energies, and a commerce of ever augmenting vastness, ministering to the happiness of free and prosperous populations, are, in the large ledger of humanity, an abundant compensation for the disappearance of the few companies of naked savages whom, when civilisation once invaded their ancestral haunts, neither the agencies of government nor philanthropy could save from the processes of decay.

The account given by Peron of the flag-raising incident was quite accurate, but he presented his readers with a wholly untrue version of Governor King's letter to Baudin. With the document before us, we must doubt whether Peron ever saw it. The passage printed by him in quotation marks bears hardly a resemblance to the courteous terms of the actual letter, which did not contain any such threat as that "all these countries form an integral part of the British Empire," and "it will be my duty to oppose by every means in my power the execution of the design you are supposed to have in view." It seems probable that Peron heard the letter read, or its contents summarised, but, in writing, mixed up the substance of it with blustering language which may have been used by Acting-Lieutenant Robbins.* (* Backhouse Walker also held this view. Early Tasmania page 18.) At all events, King used no word of menace, while conveying plainly that the establishment of a French settlement would require "explanation."

There is no good reason for disbelieving Baudin's disclaimer. It was plain and candid; and there was nothing in his actions while he was in Australian waters which belied his words. The baseless character of the gossip promulgated by Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson, and the alleged exhibition of the map indicating the exact spot where the French intended to settle in Frederick Henry Bay, were disposed of by the fact that Baudin's ships went nowhere near that place after leaving Sydney. If any French officer did show Paterson a chart, he must have been amusing himself by playing on the suspicions of the Englishman, who was probably "fishing" for information. Baudin's conduct, and that of his officers, never suggested that search for a site for settlement was part of the mission of the expedition; and, in the face of the commodore's emphatic denials, positive evidence, or a strong chain of facts to the contrary, would have to be forthcoming before such a story could be entertained. Suspicions were natural enough in face of the strained feelings, the wars, the plots and counter-plots of diplomacy, Napoleon's menaced invasion of England, and all the other factors that made for racial animosity at the beginning of the nineteenth century; but viewing the circumstances in the perspective made by the lapse of a hundred years, cool judgment must dismiss the jealous alarms of 1802 as being unfounded.

Yet a patriotic Frenchman, as Peron was, could not witness this remarkable growth of a new offshoot of British power in the South Seas without regret and misgiving. "Doubtless," he commented on Robbins' action, "that ceremony will appear silly to people who know little about English polity; but for the statesman such formalities assume a much more serious and important character. By these public and repeated declarations England seems every day to fortify her pretensions, to

establish her rights, in a positive manner, and to devise pretexts to repulse, even by force of arms, all other peoples who may wish to form settlements in these distant countries." We shall not honour Peron the less because he expressed an opinion so natural to a man solicitous for his country's prestige.

It has been stated by one or two writers that the action of Robbins put an end to the cordial relations which had previously existed between him and the French. But that is an error. They had cause to be offended, but the young man was treated with indulgence. Peron records that both Grimes and Robbins visited the tents of the French after the flag incident, and shared their frugal dinner; and Baudin informed King that, the Cumberland having lost an anchor, his forge was at work for a whole day supplying the wants of the British schooner--a service akin to heaping coals of fire on the head of the zealous acting-lieutenant. At the same time, other members of the French expedition experienced very kind treatment from British fishermen. Faure, one of the scientific staff, was sent in a small boat to complete a chart of the island. A violent storm compelled him to go ashore on the western end, where he and his sailors were for three days most hospitably entertained by sealers, who, on their departure, forced upon them some of their finest furs as presents. "How is it," comments Peron, "that such touching hospitality, of which voyages offer so many examples, is nearly always exercised by men whose poverty and roughness of character seem to impose such an obligation least upon them. It seems that misfortune, rather than philosophy and brilliant education, develops in mankind that noble and disinterested virtue which induces us to minister to the woes of others."

Le Naturaliste sailed for Europe from King Island on December 8, carrying with her all the plants and natural history specimens collected up to date, as well as the charts. The collections were, as King wrote to Sir Joseph Banks, "immense."* (* Historical Records 4 844.) Le Geographe and the Casuarina left on December 27, and sailed direct for Kangaroo Island, to resume in that neighbourhood the charting which Baudin had abandoned in the previous year. They did not, as the logs show, make any attempt to examine Port Phillip. Robbins and his seventeen guardians of British rights on the Cumberland remained for some time longer making a thorough examination; after which they sailed for Port Phillip, and Grimes made the first complete survey of that great sheet of water.

It is only necessary to add that King reported to the Admiralty his approval of Robbins' action, and that to "make the French commander acquainted with my intention of settling Van Diemen's Land was all I sought by this voyage." But it is obvious from a letter which he wrote to Banks, after Baudin's death, and after his soul had been moved to righteous wrath by the iniquitous treatment of Flinders--whom he so warmly admired and so loyally aided--that suspicion, once implanted in King's mind, was not eradicated by explicit disavowals. Had Baudin lived another year, he said, "I think it very possible that the commodore would most likely have visited the colony for the purpose of annihilating the settlement." But surely here, if ever, the lines were applicable:

"In the night imagining some fear,

How easy is a bush supposed a bear!"

Baudin, after his remarkable exploits in 1800 to 1804, was the last man whom Napoleon would have chosen to try to annihilate a British settlement anywhere. Rather, in such an unlikely event, would his own crew have been in danger of annihilation from his methods.

CHAPTER 10. RETURN OF THE EXPEDITION.

Le Geographe sails for Kangaroo Island.
Exploration of the two gulfs in the Casuarina by Freycinet.
Baudin's erratic behaviour.
Port Lincoln.
Peron among the giants.
A painful excursion.
Second visit to Timor.
Abandonment of north coast exploration.
Baudin resolves to return home.
Voyage to Mauritius.
Death of Baudin.
Treatment of him by Peron and Freycinet.
Return of Le Geographe.
Depression of the staff and crew.

Le Geographe sighted Kangaroo Island on January 2, and anchored on the 6th in Nepean Bay on the eastern side. The Casuarina joined her consort on the following day.

Freycinet, who was in command of the smaller vessel, was instructed to make a complete survey of the two gulfs named by the French after Bonaparte and Josephine, and by Flinders, their discoverer, after Lord Spencer and Lord St. Vincent, who were First Lords of the Admiralty when his own expedition was authorised and when it sailed from England.

The Casuarina was provisioned for twenty-six days for this task, and Freycinet took with him Boullanger, one of the hydrographers, who prepared the charts under his supervision. No part of the French work was better done than was the charting of the two gulfs and Kangaroo Island, and, as previously indicated, its quality very naturally aroused the suspicion that the improvement owed something to the charts of Flinders. It has been shown, however, that this was not the case. Of Boullanger's training and qualifications nothing can be said, except that it may be presumed that the Committee of the Institute of France which selected him, comprising two such experts as Bougainville and Fleurieu, must have been satisfied of his attainments. Much of his work was certainly done under severe trials and difficulties, but it is chiefly significant that the improvement in the charting synchronises with the presence in command of Freycinet; and allusion may again be made to the beautiful work done by this officer when he commanded the Uranie and the Physicienne a few years later, as showing his deep interest and practical skill in employment of this class.

There can be no doubt that the work would have been better done throughout had Captain Baudin been a more sympathetic commander. To what extent the deficiencies of the French charts of the remainder of the Terre Napoleon coasts are attributable to his failure to appreciate the requirements of his scientific staff, can be conjectured; but the peremptory manner in which he allotted so many days and no more for the survey of the gulfs, and then sailed off leaving the Casuarina to shift for herself, reveals an extraordinary temper in a commander on such service, as well as a fatuous disregard of the many hindrances that made rigid time conditions difficult to observe.

Flinders had occupied forty days in his exploration of the two gulfs--from February 21 to April 1, 1802. Freycinet occupied only twenty-one days in traversing precisely the same extent of coast-line--from January 11 to February 1, 1803. Flinders had settled the question as to whether there was a passage through the continent to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and Freycinet and Baudin were by this time aware that no important discovery of this character was to be expected. But the navigation was perilous, the risks were unknown, and Freycinet should have been able to pursue his task unhampered by the fear that if circumstances compelled him to over-stay his time for a day or two, he would be abandoned in a small vessel without provisions for more than his narrowly prescribed period. "But the character of our chief was known." "Quite sure of being pitilessly abandoned in case of delay," Freycinet made haste to return to Nepean Bay at the end of the month. But when he reached the anchorage he found that Baudin had already sailed away. "The abandonment of our companions in the midst of these vast gulfs, where so many perils might be encountered, had been a subject of consternation on board Le Geographe," Peron records. It really was unaccountable behaviour; even worse than that of the abandonment of Boullanger and his boat’s crew on the east coast of Tasmania in the previous March. A commander who treated those among his subordinates who were sustaining the most dangerous and exacting part of the work with so little consideration, can hardly have maintained their confidence, or deserved it.

The Casuarina, making all sail for Nepean Bay westward, sighted the leading ship in Investigator Strait. But Baudin did not wait even then. He kept Le Geographe on her course, under a full head of sail, without permitting the Casuarina to come up and report, or inquiring after the success of her work. The two ships soon lost sight of each other. Next day Baudin, evidently realising the enormity of his folly, veered round, and returned to Nepean Bay. But as the Casuarina had kept on westward during the night, in a frantic endeavour to catch her leader, the two vessels crossed far apart and out of vision. They did not meet again for fourteen days, when both lay at anchor in King George’s Sound.

It is not wonderful that Freycinet confessed that he was "astonished" at Baudin’s manoeuvres. They were scarcely those of a rational being, to say nothing of a commander responsible for the safety of two ships and the lives of their people. The company on the smaller vessel endured severe privations. They were reduced to a ration of three ounces of biscuit per man per day, and to a mere drink of water; and the ship herself sustained

such severe damage from heavy seas that, said Freycinet, had he been delayed a few hours in reaching King George's Sound, he would have been compelled to run her ashore to prevent her from foundering. "Judge of the horror of my position," he wrote, and he certainly did not exaggerate when he used that term; for the coast along which he ran for safety is one of the most hopelessly barren in the whole world, offering to a stranded mariner neither sustenance, shelter, nor means of deliverance.

The only feature of much interest pertaining to the geographical work of the expedition in the region of the gulfs, is the high opinion formed by Peron of Port Lincoln--called Port Champagny on the Terre Napoleon charts. The port has not played a large part in the subsequent development of Australia, but Flinders, who discovered it and named it after the chief town of his native county, and the French of Baudin's expedition, who were the second people to enter it, thought very highly of its beauty and value. Peron spoke of it as a "magnificent port," in which all the navies of Europe could float, and concluded two pages of description with the words: "Worthy rival of Port Jackson, Port Lincoln is, in all respects, one of the finest in the world; and of all those which we have discovered [yet they had not discovered a single port of any kind!], whether to the south, the west, or the north of New Holland, it appears to be, I repeat, the best adapted to receive a European colony." After many years of settlement, Port Lincoln boasts of fewer than a thousand inhabitants; for though the glowing language of admiration concerning its beauty and convenience written by Flinders and Peron were fully justified, a back country too arid to support a large population has prevented it from attaining to great importance among the harbours of Australia. To the student of the history of exploration, however, Port Lincoln is interesting even beyond the measure of its beauty; for there, in 1841, Sir John Franklin, then governor of Tasmania, erected at his own cost a monument to the honour of Flinders, his old commander, from whom he imbibed that passion for exploration which was in due time to place his own name imperishably amongst the glorious company of great English seamen.

Peron himself experienced the cross-grained temper of the commander during the visit of the ships to Sharks Bay. This was the scene of Dampier's descent upon the Western Australian coast in 1699, in the rickety little Roebuck. It was here that his men dined off sharks' flesh, and "took care that no waste should be made of it, but thought it, as things stood, good entertainment."* The bay received from Dampier, on account of the feast, the name it has ever since borne. (* Dampier's men were unprejudiced in matters of gastronomy, but their taste in fish was not to their discredit. Shark's flesh, especially when young, is, there is reason to believe, excellent eating. During some weeks in a recent summer, when what we may term "orthodox" fish was scarce, a fashionable Australian sea-side hotel was regularly supplied with young shark--"gummy"--by a fisherman, for whose veracity the author can vouch. Neither proprietor, chef, nor guests knew what it was, and all were well fed and happy.)

Some of the French sailors who had been ashore returned in a wild state of alarm on account of giants whom they professed to have seen--men of

extraordinary strength and stature, they reported, with long black beards, armed with enormous spears and shields, who ran at a furious pace, brandishing their weapons and giving utterance to fearful yells. "However extravagant these assertions might appear," said the incredulous naturalist, "it was necessary to collect precise information on the subject." The scientific Ulysses regarded the reputed Cyclops with a calculating scepticism. Had Polyphemus been at hand, Peron would have politely requested him to permit himself to be weighed and measured, and would have written an admirable monograph on his solitary optic.

There were, he considered, some reasons for thinking that a race of men of heroic proportions inhabited this western part of the continent. The Dutch captain, Vlaming, in 1697, had reported finding gigantic human footprints upon the banks of the Swan River, near where the city of Perth now stands; and two of Baudin's officers, whose names were not Munchausen and Sindbad but Heirisson and Moreau, declared that they also had observed the same phenomena at the same place. Peron set down these stories to the exaggerative distortion of lovers of the marvellous, "of whom we counted some amongst us." But when the sailors came scampering back to the ship with the tale that they had actually seen the giants and been pursued by them, the naturalist began to think that there was probably some ground for the belief. At all events, he determined to go and see for himself.

He requested Baudin to send a few armed men ashore with him, but was rudely refused. Not to be thwarted in continuing his researches in so favourable a place, Peron determined to make use of a couple of days during which a furnace was to be erected for extracting salt from the sea by evaporation--the ship's supply having been depleted--to run the risk of an excursion on his own account; whereupon Petit, one of the artists, and Guichenot, one of the gardeners, resolved to accompany him.

The adventurous three were soon favoured with a visit from a troop of aboriginals, who, though by no means giants, were certainly formidable foes. There were forty of them, all armed with spears. Peron and his companions, to defend themselves, had only a musket and a pair of pistols. The savages, terrible fellows, advanced with "clameurs terribles et menacantes." Retreat for the Frenchmen was impossible. A show of courage was the best policy; and the three, one of whom, Petit, had been "plein de terreur" when the blacks first made their appearance, put on a bold front and marched forward "avec assurance a leur rencontre." This bold tactical manoeuvre met with its deserved reward. The savages were visibly disconcerted. One of them made signs of invitation to a parley, but Peron considered it to be hazardous for one of the three to isolate himself from his companions. The trio continued to advance, resolved to sell their lives dearly if die they must. Such unexpected audacity threw the blacks into a state of uncertainty, and, after deliberating for a few moments, they turned their backs and went away, though slowly, and without the appearance of fear or disorder. Peron, Petit, and Guichenot, "to give the aboriginals a higher idea of our confidence and our courage," did not halt in their advance, but marched in the track of the retreating forty, who climbed to the height of a steep cliff and there continued to yell and gesticulate as though desiring to have conference

with one of the white men. "After having responded for some time with similar cries and gestures"--Ulysses defying Polyphemus will recur to the mind--Peron and his companions concluded this signal display of coolness and daring by quietly walking back and proceeding on their journey inland. They were not pursued nor further molested.

Cool vision detracted from the gigantic stature of the Sharks Bay blacks as effectually as a cool demeanour disposed of the danger from them. The tallest man among them Peron declared to be no more than five feet four or five inches in height, and most of the forty were small sized, thin-limbed, and of feeble appearance. It is easy to perceive in this incident, where a disposition to exaggerate looking through the lens of fear, magnified a group of slight and slender savages into terrific giants, how many a legend has come to birth. The original sons of Anak would probably have been severely shortened of their inches had a Peron been available to bring illusion promptly to the test of measurement, and perhaps a scientific Jack the Giant Killer could have done deadly execution with a foot-rule.* (* It may be noted that Peron's researches regarding the physical proportions and capacities of savage races aroused much interest in France. The Moniteur of April 25 and June 23, 1808, published two long articles on "the physical force of savage people," founded upon Peron's writings and his records of comparative dynamometric data.)

The three adventurers suffered far more severely from the heat of the sun and the fatigues of working among thick bush and sand than from the natives of the country. They made a fine collection of specimens, and, congratulating themselves on their success, endeavoured to make their way back to the boat. But they soon realised that they were "bushed"--a term familiar enough to those who are acquainted with the story of Australian inland exploration. The country was covered with thick scrub, through which they endeavoured to make their way. The afternoon sun poured down a pitiless flood of heat, the white, glaring sand burnt their feet, the air in the Bush was stifling. It was as though they were walking through furnaces; and there were no spreading trees to relieve the ordeal by a touch of shade. They at length regained the shore, and trudged along the soft, hot sand; when Peron, exhausted after a walk of three hours, was compelled to throw aside the greater part of the collection which he had made at the expense of so much painful labour. Shortly afterwards Guichenot fell to the ground exhausted by hunger, thirst, and fatigue, and begged his companions to leave him there to die while they endeavoured to save themselves. Peron remembered a passage he had read in Cook's voyages about the reviving effect of a plunge in sea-water; and he and Petit tried it by wading in up to their necks. They assisted Guichenot to do the same, and revived him sufficiently to enable him to continue the weary march. The sun set; a breeze sprang up; and soon the three travellers saw with joy the smoke of a fire which had been lighted as a guide to them. They staggered on, and at last all three fell fainting in sight of their companions, who hurried forward to relieve them.

There is nothing incredible in Peron's narrative of the sufferings of himself and his companions on this excursion. It is not surprising to one

with a knowledge of the local conditions. The exertions they had made should have earned them commendation, or at least compassion, from the commandant. But Baudin's view was censorious. Three times during the evening a gun had been fired from the ship as a signal to the boat to return. The officer in charge of the shore party considered that it would be unjustifiable to leave until the three travellers returned, and trusted that this explanation would be accepted as excusing the delay. A sea fog now prevented the boat from returning forthwith; but the sailors had neither food nor water to give to the parched and famished unfortunates. When at last they did reach the ship, they had been for forty hours without sup or sip; they were prostrate from sheer weakness; and Peron himself was reduced to the extremity that his leathern tongue refused to articulate. The commandant was the only man aboard who had no pity to spare for their misery. Baudin actually fined the officer in charge of the boat ten francs for every gun fired, because he had not obeyed the return signal, and for not "abandoning all three." "Those were the very words of our chief," wrote Peron; "and yet I had, to save his life at Timor, given to his physician part of the small stock of excellent quinine that I had brought for my own use."

This heartless conduct, taken in conjunction with Baudin's abandonment of Boullanger on the Tasmanian coast, and his strange behaviour to the Casuarina after the exploration of the gulfs, leaves one in no doubt as to his singular deficiency in the qualities essential to the commander of an expedition of discovery. It was his invariable practice, we also read, to provision boats engaged on any special service for the bare time that he meant them to be absent; so many ounces of food and so many pints of water per man per day, and no more, leaving no margin for accidents, allowing of no excuse for unavoidable delay. A sensible person would not provide for a picnic on such principles.

The exploration of the west and north-west coasts was continued till the end of April, when Baudin decided to go once more to Timor. His intention was, after refreshing his men and taking in supplies at the Dutch settlement, to spend some time in the Gulf of Carpentaria and along the southern shores of New Guinea. On May 6, Kupang harbour was entered for the second time. There it was learnt that Flinders had called at the port in the Investigator in April, after having concluded his exploration of the northern gulf. He had been compelled to relinquish his work owing to the rotten condition of his ship's timbers, and had sailed back to Port Jackson. As he had reached the Gulf of Carpentaria by sailing up the eastern side of the continent, and returned through Torres Strait down the western coast, and through Bass Strait on the south, Flinders was the first sailor to accomplish the circumnavigation of Australia, as he had also been the first to circumnavigate Tasmania.* (* Tasman, in 1642, sailed from Batavia, in Java, thence to Mauritius, Tasmania, New Zealand, the Friendly Islands, northern New Guinea, and back to Batavia. This was a wide circumnavigation of the whole of New Holland; but he did not sight Australia, and as, of course, he did not go near Bass Strait, he did not circumnavigate the continent proper.)

Le Geographe and the Casuarina remained at Kupang till June 3--twenty-eight days--enjoying the hospitality of the Dutch. Peron made

several excursions for collecting purposes, and once shot an alligator nine feet long, which he skinned. He had the hide and head carried down to the port by Malays on long bamboo poles, this method of conveyance being necessitated by the superstitious refusal of the natives to touch even the skin of the dreaded beast. But the labour was to a large extent wasted, for putrefaction advanced, while the skin was in transit, to such an extent that all but the head had to be thrown into the sea.

Baudin's plan, after leaving Kupang, was to continue the exploration of the coasts of Western Australia. But very light breezes, alternating with calms, prevented substantial progress, and after spending the greater part of the month ineffectually in traversing only a few leagues, it was concluded (June 28) that to continue the work in detail from west to east at that season of the year would merely lead to a futile waste of time. Here again the logic of facts was required to convince Baudin, who had previously rejected sound advice that was offered to him, to the effect that contrary winds would thwart his designs. The winds blow at certain seasons with steady consistency in these regions, and an experienced navigator, knowing what he has to expect, makes his plans accordingly. When Flinders was driven reluctantly to abandon finishing the exploration of the north coast through the dangerous condition of the Investigator, he made his way back to Port Jackson by the western route, because, although it was considerably longer, he thereby secured favourable winds; and he reached port in safety. If we may judge from his habitual perversity, Baudin, under similar circumstances, would have taken the shorter route, regardless of normal conditions, and would have lost his ship.

Changing his route after much waste of time, Baudin took his vessels towards the south-west of New Guinea, with the intention of making investigations there. But again the sailing was for the most part slow, especially as the Casuarina made very poor progress; and when within a few leagues from False Cape--called Cape Walshe on the French charts--circumstances compelled the commander to review his position and prospects in a serious light. Once more the supply of water was running short. The ships carried from Kupang sufficient for ninety-five days. Apart from the necessities of the crew, some had to be spared for the plants and animals--kangaroos, emus, etc.--which were being carried to Europe. Thirty-four days had been dawdled away without achieving any substantial results. For the ultimate return to Mauritius sufficient water to last forty days must be conserved. Consequently Baudin argued that he could not by any possibility afford to remain in these waters longer than three more weeks; and as in that time not much could be done, he determined to return home at once. His decision gave pleasure to his unhappy people; but surely it was that of a man whose heart was not in his work. No attempt was made to send parties ashore to search for fresh water. When Flinders ran short, and did not come across a convenient spring or stream, he dug and found water, as at Port Lincoln; and a very experienced traveller has observed that "in nearly all parts of Australia it is usually found a few feet beneath the surface of the ground."* (* Ward, Rambles of an Australian Naturalist page 109.)

But there were other reasons which conduced to create in Baudin that

depression which is inimical to the protracted pursuit of an allotted task. Sickness once more laid its hand upon the crews. The commander himself was in bad health. The demands upon the resources of the doctors were so numerous that their medicines became exhausted, and they were unable to attend satisfactorily to the necessities of a constantly increasing number of ailing men. Bernier, the astronomer, died before the order to return was given. He was a young man of great promise--"savant et laborieux," as Peron wrote of him--whose original work before he reached full manhood had attracted the notice of Lalande. Selected by the Institute to fill a scientific post with the expedition, he did excellent work, and his death cut short a career that gave indications of being brilliant and useful. Cape Bernier, on the east coast of Tasmania--opposite the southern end of Maria Island--preserves his name.

On July 7 the order was given to turn, and sail for Mauritius. Le Geographe put into Port Louis on August 7, and the Casuarina, after a very rough voyage, reached the harbour five days later.

Baudin, whose illness had continued throughout the voyage, died while his ships lay at Mauritius, on September 16. His death had been expected for some time before it occurred, and if there was little surprise at the event, it is pathetic to observe that there was as little regret. Not a word of sympathy appeared in the studiously frigid terms in which the decease of the commander was chronicled in the official history of the voyage. Not a syllable was used expressing appreciation of any qualities which he may have possessed, either as an officer or a man. After curtly mentioning his illness, Peron recorded the death and burial in two sentences sterile of emotion. He showed more regret when he had to throw away the skin of the alligator which he shot at Timor, than when mentioning the death of one who had been his chief for three years. "Finally the last moment arrived; and on September 16, 1803, at about mid-day, M. Baudin ceased to exist. On the 17th he was buried with the honours due to the rank he had occupied in the navy; all the officers and savants of the expedition assisted at the funeral, which was also attended by the principal authorities of the colony." That is all. Had it been Peron’s manner to record the deaths of the companions of his voyage with such barren brevity, there would be nothing in the passage to excite comment. But when a sailor fell overboard we were told what an excellent and laborious man he was, and how much he was regretted; the death of Bernier called forth an appropriate sentence of eulogy; when Depuch, the mineralogist died, we were properly informed that he was as much esteemed for his modesty and the goodness of his heart as for the extent and variety of his knowledge. The contrast between these instances and the summary plainness of the statement when Baudin’s end was mentioned, cannot escape notice; any more than we can mistake the meaning of the consistent suppression of his name throughout the text of the volumes.

Attention has to be directed to this display of animosity because, in bare justice to Baudin, we have to remember that the only story of the expedition which we have is that written by Peron and Freycinet, who were plainly at enmity with him. If the facts were as related by them, Baudin was not only an absurdly obstinate and ungenial captain, but we are left with grave doubts as to his competency as a navigator on service of this

description. Yet even facts, when detailed by those who hate a man, take a different colouring from the same facts set down by the man himself, with his reasons for what he did. We have no material for forming an opinion from Baudin's point of view. If his manuscript journals are capable of throwing fresh light on the events concerned, their publication, if they remain in existence, would be welcome. All that at present we can set against the hard, unsympathetic view of the man as we see him in the pages written by Peron and revised by Freycinet, is his conduct and correspondence in relation to Governor King at Port Jackson; and there he appears as a gentleman of agreeable manners, graceful expression, and ready tact. We do not form a lower opinion of him in consequence of the letter which he wrote in reply to the one delivered by Acting-Lieutenant Robbins. because there he expressed views imbibed as almost a part of the atmosphere of the Revolution amidst which he had been reared. If we had only the Baudin-King correspondence, we should think him not unworthy to be the successor of La Perouse and Bougainville. If we had only the Voyage de Decouvertes, we should think him barely fit to command a canal barge. It may not have been the happiness of many navigators to enjoy the affection of those under them to such an eminent degree as did Cook and Flinders; but there are fortunately latitudes of difference between love and hate. Respect is often felt to be due when deeper sentiments are not stimulated. The cold chronicle that the honours appropriate to his rank were paid to Baudin at his funeral seems very harsh; and one feels that Freycinet, at any rate, whom Baudin had promoted to the command of the Casuarina, and furnished with a chance of distinguishing himself, might have sunk his grievances sufficiently to add a word in praise of at least some virtue which we may hope that the dead captain possessed.

Baudin wrote a letter from King Island to Jussieu which indicated that the experience had been an unhappy one for him.* (* The letter was printed in the Moniteur, 22nd Fructidor, Revolutionary Year 11 (September 9, 1803). Baudin's death was recorded in the Moniteur on 13th Germinal, Revolutionary Year 12 (April 3, 1804).) "I have never made so painful a voyage," he said. "More than once my health has been impaired, but if I can terminate the expedition conformably to the intentions of the Government and to the satisfaction of the French nation, there will remain little to desire, and my sufferings will soon be forgotten." To a very large extent Baudin must be held responsible for the misfortunes and failures attending his command, but it is an act of justice to clear him from aspersions that have been made upon him for things that occurred after his death. He had nothing whatever to do with the imprisonment of Flinders, for which he has been blamed by writers who have not looked into the literature of the subject sufficiently to be aware that he was dead at the time; nor was he in any way connected with the issue of the Terre Napoleon maps, with which his name has also been associated.

General Decaen, Napoleon's newly appointed governor, arrived at the island eight days after Le Geographe, and at once began to administer affairs upon new lines of policy. A little later the French admiral, Linois, with a fleet of frigates, entered port. On the death of Baudin, Linois directed that the Casuarina should be dismantled, and appointed Captain Milius to the command of Le Geographe, with instructions to take

her home as soon as her sick crew recovered and she had been revictualled. Peron, as has already been explained, had some conversation with Decaen, imparting to him the conclusion he had formulated relative to the secret intentions of the British for the augmentation of their possessions in the Pacific and Indian Oceans; but there is no record that Decaen saw Baudin, who was probably too ill to attend to affairs in the period between the general's arrival and his own death. It is hardly likely that Baudin, who, from his intimacy with King, knew more about British policy than the naturalist did, would have supported Peron's excited fancies.

Le Geographe sailed from Mauritius on December 15, and reached Europe without the occurrence of any further incidents calling for comment. She entered the port of Lorient on March 24, 1804. Captain Milius decided not to make for Havre, whence the expedition had sailed in 1800, in consequence of what had happened to Le Naturaliste on her return to Europe in the previous year. War was declared by the British Government against France in May, and every captain in King George's navy was alert and eager to get in a blow upon the enemy. The frigate Minerva, Captain Charles Buller, sighted Le Naturaliste in the Channel, stopped her, and insisted, despite her passport, on taking her into Portsmouth. She was detained there from May 27 till June 6, when the Admiralty, being informed of what had occurred, ordered her immediate release. She left Portsmouth and arrived at Havre on the same day, June 6, 1803.

Perhaps nothing can convey more effectually the utter weariness and depression of officers, staff, and crew, than the language in which Freycinet chronicled the return. It might be supposed, he wrote, that the end of the voyage would be heralded with joy. But they were themselves surprised to find that they were but slightly touched with pleasure at seeing again the shores of their own country after so long an absence. "It might be said that the very sight of our ship, recalling too strongly the sufferings of which we had been the victims, poisoned all our affections. It was not until we were far away from the coast that our souls could expand to sentiments of happiness which had been so long strangers to us."

This, surely, was not the language of men who believed that they had accomplished things for which the world would hold them in honour. It was not the language of triumphant discoverers, whose good fortune it had been to reveal unknown coasts, and to finish that complete map of the continents which had been so long a-making. Would it, one wonders, have made Freycinet a little happier had he known that at this very time the English navigator who had made the discoveries for which Baudin's expedition was sent out, was held in the clutch of General Decaen in Mauritius, and that the way was clear to hurry on the publication of forestalling maps and records whilst Flinders was, as it were, battened under hatches?

CHAPTER 11. RESULTS.

Establishment of the First Empire.

Reluctance of the French Government to publish a record of the expedition.
Report of the Institute.
The official history of the voyage authorised.
Peron’s scientific work.
His discovery of Pyrosoma atlanticum.
Other scientific memoirs.
His views on the modification of species.
Geographical results.
Freycinet’s charts.

Startling changes in the political complexion of France had occurred during the absence of the expedition. Citizen Bonaparte, who in May 1800 had concurred in the representations of the Institute that discovery in southern regions would redound to the glory of the nation, had since given rein to the conception that the glory of France meant, properly interpreted, his own.* (* It was so from the beginning of his career as Consul, according to M. Paul Brosses’ interpretation of his character. "Il est deja et sera de plus en plus convaincu que travailler a sa grandeur, c’est travailler a la grandeur du pays." Consulat et Empire, 1907 page 27.) He meant to found a dynasty, and woe to those whom he regarded as standing in his way. One of the first pieces of news that those who landed from Le Geographe at Lorient on the 25th March would hear, was that just four days before, the Duc d’Enghien, son of the Duc de Bourbon, had been shot after an official examination so formal as to be no better than a mockery, for his grave had actually been dug before the inquiry commenced. When Peron and his companions reached Paris, they would hear and read of debates among the representatives of the Republic, mostly favourable to the establishment of a new hereditary Imperial dignity; and they would be in good time to take an interest in the plebiscite which, by a majority of nearly fourteen hundred to one, approved the new constitution and enacted that "Napoleon Bonaparte, now First Consul of the Republic, is Emperor of the French." They were, in short, back soon enough to witness the process--it may well have suggested to the naturalist a comparison with phenomena very familiar to him--by which the Consular-chrysalis Bonaparte became the Emperor-moth Napoleon.

It was, of course, a very busy year for those responsible to their illustrious master for the administration of departments. With a great naval war on hand, with plots frequently being formed or feared, with the wheels and levers of diplomacy to watch and manipulate, with immense changes in the machinery of Government going forward, and with the obligation of satisfying the exacting demands of a chief who was often in a rage, and always tremendously energetic, the ministers of France were not likely to have much enthusiasm to spare for maps and charts, large collections of dead birds, insects, beasts, fishes, butterflies, and plants, specimens of rocks and quantities of shells.

It is likely enough that absorption in more insistent affairs rather than a hostile feeling explains the reluctance of the French Government to authorise the publication of an official history of the voyage when such a project was first submitted. Freycinet and his colleagues learnt "with

astonishment" that the authorities were unfavourable. "It was," he wrote, "as if the miseries that we had endured, and to which a great number of our companions had fallen victims, could be regarded as forming a legitimate ground of reproach against us." It is more reasonable to suppose that pressure of other business prevented Napoleon's ministers from devoting much consideration to the subject. Men who have endured hazards and hardships, and who return home after a long absence expecting to be welcomed with acclaim, are disposed to feel snubbed and sore when they find people not inclined to pay much attention to them. Remembering the banquets and the plaudits that marked the despatch of the expedition, those of its members who expected a demonstration may well have been chilled by the small amount of notice they received. But the public as well as the official mood was conceivably due rather to intense concentration upon national affairs, during a period of amazing transition, than to the prejudice which Freycinet's ruffled pride suggested. "It would be difficult to explain," he wrote, "how, during the voyage, there could have been formed concerning the expedition an opinion so unfavourable, that even before our return the decision was arrived at not to give any publicity to our works. The reception that we met with on arriving in France showed the effects of such an unjust and painful prejudice."* (* Preface to the 1824 edition of the Voyage de Decouvertes.)

When Le Naturaliste arrived at Havre in the previous year, the Moniteur* (* 14th Messidor, Revolutionary Year 10. (July 3, 1803).) gave an account of the very large collection of specimens that she brought, and spoke cordially of the work; and in the following month* (* 27th Thermidor, Revolutionary Year 11. (August 15).) Napoleon's organ published a long sketch of the course of the voyage up to the King Island stage, from particulars contained in despatches and supplied by Hamelin. The earlier arrival of Le Naturaliste had the effect, also, of taking the edge off public interest. This may be counted as one of the causes of the rather frigid reception accorded to Le Geographe.

The only fact that lends any colour to Freycinet's supposition of prejudice, is that the Moniteur article of 27th Thermidor suggested a certain unsatisfactoriness about the charts sent home by Baudin. His communications clearly led the Government to believe that he had made important discoveries on the south coast of Australia, but unfortunately the rough drawings accompanying his descriptions did not enable official experts to form an accurate opinion. He mentioned the two large gulfs, but furnished no chart of them.* (* "Cette decouverte [i.e. of the gulfs] du Capitaine Baudin est tres interessante en ce qu'elle completera la reconnaissance de la cote sud de la Nouvelle Hollande qui est due entierement a la France. On ne peut pas encore juger du degre d'exactitude avec laquelle elle a ete faite, parce que le citoyen Baudin n'a envoye qu'une partie de la carte qu'il en a dressee, et que cette carte meme n'est qu'une premiere esquisse. Il y a jointe une carte qui marque seulement sa route, avec les sondes le long de toute cette cote, et il promet d'envoyer l'autre partie de la cote par la premiere occasion qu'il trouvera." Moniteur, 27th Thermidor, Revolutionary Year 11.) The reason for that was, of course, that at the time when Le Naturaliste left for France Baudin had not penetrated the gulfs, and could have had no

representation of them to submit. The article also alluded to another chart of part of the coast in the neighbourhood of Cape Leeuwin, as not conveying much information.* (* It was "figuree assez grossierement et sans details.") These statements are useful as enabling us to understand why Baudin was so shy about showing his charts to Flinders. If they gave little satisfaction to the writer of the Moniteur article, we can imagine what a critic who had been over the ground himself would have thought about them.

These considerations scarcely afford reason for inferring that the Government had formed a prejudice against the work of the expedition before making a complete examination of its records, though it is very probable that dissatisfaction was expressed about the charts. Hamelin, also, would be fairly certain to intimate privately what he knew to be the case, that Flinders had been beforehand with the most important of the discoveries. Indeed, the Moniteur article expressly mentioned that when Baudin met Flinders, the latter had "pursued the coast from Cape Leeuwin to the place of meeting." The information that the English captain had accomplished so much, despite the fact that he had left England months after Baudin sailed from France, was not calculated to give pleasure to Ministers. It was to this feeling that Sir Joseph Banks referred when, in writing to Flinders, he said that he had heard that the French Government were not too well pleased with Baudin's work.* (* Girard, writing in 1857, stated that rumours about Baudin's conduct, circulated before the arrival of Le Geographe, induced the public to believe that the expedition had been abortive, without useful results, and that it was to the interest of the Government to forget all about it. F. Peron, page 46. But Girard cites no authority for the statement, and as he was not born in 1804, he is not himself an authoritative witness. He merely repeated Freycinet's assertions.)

The distinguished men of science who stood at the head of the Institute of France were best qualified to judge of the value of the work done; and they at least spoke decisively in its praise. The collections brought home by Le Naturaliste had included one hundred and eighty cases of minerals and animals, four cases of dried plants, three large casks of specimens of timber, two boxes of seeds, and sixty tubs of living plants.* (* Moniteur, 14th Messidor, Revolutionary Year 11 (July 3, 1803).) On June 9, 1806, a Committee of the Institute, consisting of Cuvier, Laplace, Bougainville, Fleurieu, and Lacepede, furnished a report based upon an examination of the scientific specimens and the manuscript of the first volume of the Voyage de Decouvertes, which, in the meantime, had been written by Peron. They referred in terms of warm eulogy to the industry which had collected more than one hundred thousand specimens; to the new species discovered, estimated by the professors at the Musee at two thousand five hundred; and to the care and skill displayed by Peron in describing and classifying, a piece of work appealing with especial force to the co-ordinating intelligence of Cuvier. They directed attention to the observations made by the naturalist upon the British colony at Port Jackson; and their language on this subject may be deemed generous in view of the fact that England and France were then at war. "M. Peron," reported the savants, "has applied himself particularly to studying the details of that vast system of colonisation which is being

developed at once upon a great continent, upon innumerable islands, and upon the wide ocean. His work in that respect should be of the greatest interest for the philosopher and the statesman. Never, perhaps, did a subject more interesting and more curious offer itself to the meditation of either, than the colony of Botany Bay, so long misunderstood in Europe."* (* The colony was not at Botany Bay, though the mistake was common enough even in England. But the champion error on that subject was that of Dumas, who, in Les Trois Mousquetaires, chapter 52--the period, as "every schoolboy knows," of Cardinal Richelieu--represents Milady as reflecting bitterly on her fate, and fearing that D'Artagnan would transport her "to some loathsome Botany Bay," a century and a quarter before Captain Cook discovered it! Dumas, however, was a law unto himself in such matters.) Never, perhaps, was there a more shining example of the powerful influence of laws and institutions upon the character of individuals and peoples. To transform the most redoubtable highwaymen, the most abandoned thieves of England, into honest and peaceable citizens; to make laborious husbandmen of them; to effect the same revolution in the characters of the vilest women; to force them, by infallible methods, to become honest wives and excellent mothers of families; to take the young and preserve them, by the most assiduous care, from the contagion of their reprobate parents, and so to prepare a generation more virtuous than that which it succeeds: such is the touching spectacle that these new English colonies present."

The passage may be compared with Peron's own observations on the same subject, given in Chapter 9. A more erroneous view of the effects of convict colonisation could hardly have been conveyed; but the paragraph may have been written to catch the eye of Napoleon, who was a strong believer in transportation as a remedial punishment for serious crime, and had spoken in favour of it in the Council of State during the discussions on the Civil Code.* (* See Thibaudeau, Memoires sur le Consulat, English edition, translated by G.K. Fortescue, LL.D., London 1908 page 180. Transportation, said Napoleon, "is in accord with public opinion, and is prescribed by humane considerations. The need for it is so obvious that we should provide for it at once in the Civil Code. We have now in our prisons six thousand persons who are doing nothing, who cost a great deal of money, and who are always escaping. There are thirty to forty highwaymen in the south who are ready to surrender to justice on condition that they are transported. Certainly we ought to settle the question now, while we have it in our minds. Transportation is imprisonment, certainly, but in a cell more than thirty feet square." The highwaymen mentioned by Bonaparte must have been remarkable persons. It was so like highwaymen to wish to be arrested! Perhaps there were also birds in the south who were willing to be caught on condition that salt was put on their tails.)

In addition to these representations, Peron was accorded an interview with the Minister of Marine, Decres, when, supported by Fleurieu and other members of the Institute, he explained what the expedition had done, and exhibited specimens of his collections and of Lesueur's drawings. Champagny, the Minister of the Interior, was also induced to listen to the eloquent pleading of the naturalist. As a result, the Government resolved to publish; and in 1807 appeared the first volume of

the text, together with a thin folio atlas containing a number of beautiful drawings and two charts. The books were issued under the superscription, "par ordre de S.M. L'Empereur et Roi." On Sunday, January 12, 1808--"apres la messe"--Peron, who was accompanied by Lesueur, one of the artists, had the honour of being admitted to the presence of the Emperor, and presented him with a copy of the work.* (* Moniteur, January 13, 1808.) The naturalist became somewhat of a favourite with the Empress Josephine, who on several occasions sent a carriage to his lodgings to take him to Malmaison; and she treated him "as a good mother would have treated a dear son."* (* Girard, F. Peron page 50.) He gave to her a pair of black swans from Australia, and the Empress generously discharged debts which he had incurred in acquiring part of his collection.

Peron died of a throat disease on December 14, 1810, just seventeen days after the liberated Flinders reached England. He was buried at Cerilly, where a monument, designed by Lesueur, marks his grave. At the time of his death he had not quite finished writing the second volume of the Voyage de Decouvertes. The conclusion of the work was therefore entrusted to Louis de Freycinet, who had already been commissioned to produce the atlas of charts.

Of Peron's personal character, and of the value of his scientific work, nothing but high praise can be written. He was but a young man when he died. Had he lived, we cannot doubt that he would have filled an important place among French men of science, for his diligence was coupled with insight, and his love of research was as deep as his aptitude for it was keen. A pleasant picture of the man was penned by Kerandren, who had been one of the surgeons on the expedition to Australia. "Peron," he said* (* Moniteur, January 24, 1811. The Moniteur of June 7, 1812, also contained a eulogy on Peron delivered before the Societe Medicale d'emulation de Paris, by A.J.B. Louis.), "carried upon his face the expression of kindliness and sensibility. The fervour of his mind, the vivacity of his character, were tempered by the extreme goodness of his heart. He made himself useful to most of those who were the companions of his voyage. There was joined to his confidence in his own ability, a great modesty. He was so natural--I would even say so candid--that it was impossible to resist the charm of his manners and his conversation."

Apart from his authorship of the first and part of the second volume of the Voyage de Decouvertes, Peron wrote a number of short "memoires sur divers sujets," suggested to his mind by observations made during the voyage. One of the most valuable of these, from a scientific point of view, was an essay upon the causes of phosphorescence in the sea, frequently observed in tropical and subtropical regions, but occasionally in European waters.*

(* Crabbe described it admirably in The Borough (9 103):

"And now your view upon the ocean turn,
And there the splendour of the waves discern;
Cast but a stone, or strike them with an oar,
And you shall flames within the deep explore;

Or scoop the stream phosphoric as you stand,
And the cold flames shall flash along your hand;
When, lost in wonder, you shall walk and gaze
On weeds that sparkle and on waves that blaze.)

Although Peron was not the first naturalist to explain that this aspect of floating fire given to the waves was due to the presence of multitudes of living organisms, he was the first naturalist to describe their structure and functional processes.* (* Phipson on Phosphorescence (1862) page 113, mentions that as early as 1749 and 1750, Vianetti and Grixellini, two Venetians, discovered in the waters of the Adriatic quantities of luminous animalculae; and the true cause of the phenomena must have occurred to many of those who witnessed it, though groundless and absurd theories were current. Of the creature discovered and described by Peron, Phipson says that it is "one of the most curious of animals. It belongs to the tribe of Tunicata. Each individual resembles a minute cylinder of glowing phosphorus. Sometimes they are seen adhering together in such prodigious numbers that the ocean appears as if covered with an enormous mass of shining phosphorus or molten lava." Professor Moseley investigated the Pyrosoma while with the Challenger expedition. He wrote: "A giant Pyrosoma was caught by us in the deep-sea trawl. It was like a great sac, with its walls of jelly about an inch in thickness. It was four feet long and ten inches in diameter. When a Pyrosoma is stimulated by having its surface touched, the phosphorescent light breaks out just at the spot stimulated, and then spreads over the surface of the colony to the surrounding animals. I wrote my name with my finger on the surface of the giant Pyrosoma as it lay on deck, and my name came out in a few seconds in letters of fire." The author owes this last reference to an excellent paper on "Phosphorescence in Plants and Animals," by Miss Freda Bage, M.Sc., printed in the Victorian Naturalist, 21 page 100 November 1904.) His treatise on the Pyrosoma atlanticum is an extremely interesting example of his scientific work. The creature is weighed and measured; its appearance is described; then it is carefully taken to pieces and its structure and internal organisation are minutely detailed; next there is an account of its functions, and an explanation of how the phosphorescent appearance is produced; and finally its mode of life, nutrition, and system of generation are dealt with. Peron collects a number of specimens, places them in a vessel filled with sea-water, and observes how, at rhythmic intervals, the creature alternately contracts and dilates in a fashion analogous to the art of breathing among more highly organised animals; and he notices that the phosphorescence appears and disappears with these movements, being most fully displayed when the creature’s body is most contracted, and disappearing during the moments of most complete expansion. Here we have careful examination and observation, study of the organism in its native habitat, anatomical dissection, and experiment--a piece of biological work exceedingly well done. Cuvier would have read the piece with satisfaction in his pupil.

Other Memoires by Peron, on the temperature of the sea on the surface and at measured depths; on the zoology of the Austral regions; on dysentery in hot countries and the medicinal use of the betel-nut; on sea animals, such as seals; and on the art of maintaining live animals in zoological collections, were valuable; and the subjects on which he wrote are

mentioned as indicating the range of his scientific interests. One of his pieces of work which, naturally, aroused much interest in Europe, was an extremely curious investigation relative to the physiological peculiarities of females of the Bushman tribes in South Africa, where Peron made an inland journey for the purpose.* (* There is a technical note on this delicate subject in Girard's F. Peron, Naturaliste, Voyageur aux Terres Australes (Paris, 1857); a book which also gives a good summary of Peron's scientific work.)

When he died, Peron had not had time to apply himself adequately to the enormous mass of material that he had collected. His fertile and curious mind, we cannot doubt, would have enriched the scientific literature of France with many other monographs. The deaths at sea of Bernier and Deleuze also deprived the records of the expedition of contributions which they would have made on their special lines of research. Collections of specimens and piles of memoranda, uninformed by the intelligence of those to whom their meaning is most apparent, are a barren result.

Peron's biological work was done in accordance with the spirit and principles of Cuvier, who stood at the head of European savants in his own field. "Trained for four years in Cuvier's school," wrote the naturalist, "I had for guide not only his method and his principles, but manuscript instructions that he had had the goodness to write for me on my departure from Europe." Cuvier insisted on the importance of structure and function; "to name well you must know well." The part played by the creature in its own share of the world, its nervous organisation, its life as involved in its form, were essentials upon which he laid stress in his teaching; and he imparted to those who came under his influence a breadth of view, a feeling for the unity of nature, that is quite modern, and has governed all the greatest of his successors. "Not only is each being an organism, the whole universe is one, but many million times more complicated; and that which the anatomist does for a single animal--for the microcosm--the naturalist is to do for the macrocosm, for the universal animal, for the play of this immense aggregation of partial organisms." Detailed research, coupled with an outlook on the whole realm of nature--that was the essential principle of Cuvier's science; and it is because we can recognise in Peron a man who had profitably sat at the feet of the great master, that his death before he had applied his zeal to the material collected with so much labour is the more deeply to be regretted.

The few paragraphs in which Peron expressed his views regarding the modification of species may be quoted. It has to be remembered that they were written in the early years of the nineteenth century, when ideas on this subject were in a state of uncertainty rather than of transition, and more than half a century before Darwin gave an entirely new direction to thought by publishing his great hypothesis. Cuvier at this time believed in the fixity of species--constancy in the type with modification in the form of individuals; but his opinions underwent some amount of change in the latter part of his career. The point argued with such gravity, and the conclusion which Peron stresses with the impressiveness of italics, are not such as a naturalist nowadays would

think it worth while to elaborate, namely, that organisms having a general structural similarity are modified by climate and environment. It would not require a voyage to another hemisphere to convince a schoolboy of that truth nowadays. But the paragraphs have a certain historical value, for they put what was evidently an important idea to an accomplished naturalist a century ago. They present us, in that aspect, with an interesting bit of pre-Darwinian generalisation.

"Before natural history had acquired a strict and appropriate language of its own," wrote Peron,* (* Voyage de Decouvertes, 1824 edition 3 243.) "when its methods were defective and incomplete, travellers and naturalists confused under one name, in imitation of each other, so to speak, animals which were essentially different. There is no class of the animal kingdom which, in the actual state of things, does not include several orbicular species; that is to say, several species which are in some degree common to all parts of the globe, however they may be modified by geographical and climatic conditions. Other species, although confined to certain latitudes, are, however, usually regarded as common to all climates, and to all seas comprised within these latitudes. The existence of these last animals is regarded as being independent of latitude. To confine ourselves to marine species, one sees it constantly repeated in books of the most estimable character, that the great whale (Balaena mysticetus, Linn.) is found equally amidst the frozen waters of Spitzbergen and in the Antarctic seas; that the sharks and seals of various kinds are found in equally innumerable tribes in seas the farthest apart in the two hemispheres; that the turtle and the tortoise inhabit indifferently the Atlantic, the Indian, and the great equinoctial oceans.

"Were one to consult only reason and analogy, such assertions would appear to be doubtful, as a matter of experience they are found to be absolutely false. Let any one glance at the evidence upon which these pretended identities rest; one will then see that they exist only in the names, and that there is not a single WELL-KNOWN animal belonging to the northern hemisphere, which is not specifically different from all other animals EQUALLY WELL KNOWN in the opposite hemisphere. I have taken the trouble to make that difficult comparison in the case of the cetacea, the seals, etc.; I have examined many histories of voyages; I have gathered together all the descriptions of animals; and I have recognised important differences between the most similar of these supposedly identical species.

"Nobody, I dare say, has collected more animals than I have done in the southern hemisphere. I have observed and described them in their own habitat. I have brought several thousands of kinds to Europe; they are deposited in the Natural History Museum at Paris. Let any one compare these numerous animals with those of our hemisphere, and the problem will soon be resolved, not only in regard to the more perfectly organised species, but even as to those which are simpler in structure, and which, in that regard, it would appear, should show less variety in nature...In all that multitude of animals from the southern hemisphere, one will observe that there is not one which can be precisely matched in northern seas; and one will be forced to conclude from such a reflective

examination--such an elaborate and prolonged comparison--as I have been forced to do myself, THAT THERE IS NOT A SINGLE SPECIES OF WELL-KNOWN ANIMALS WHICH, TRULY COSMOPOLITE, IS INDISTINGUISHABLY COMMON TO ALL PARTS OF THE GLOBE.

"More than that--and it is in this respect above all that the inexhaustible variety of nature shines forth--however imperfect each of these animals may be, each has received its own distinct features. It is to certain localities that they are fixed; it is there that they are found to be most numerous, largest in size and most beautiful; and to the extent that they are found most distant from the appropriate place, the individuals degenerate and the species becomes gradually extinguished."

On the geographical side the series of causes described in preceding pages prevented the achievement of that measure of success which the French Government and the Institute had a right to expect. While Baudin dallied, Flinders snatched the crown of accomplishment by his own diligent and intelligent application to the work entrusted to him in the proper field of activity. The French filled in the map of eastern Tasmania, and contributed details to the knowledge of the north-west coast of Australia; but what they did constitutes a poor set-off against what they failed to do. The chief feature of interest, in an estimation of the work done, is the publication of the first map of Australia which represented the whole outline of the continent--saving defects--with any approach to completeness. The Carte Generale of 1807 showed the world for the first time what the form of Australia really was, with its south coasts fairly delimited, and the island of Tasmania set in its proper position in relation to them. But the circumstances in which this result was effected were not such as secured any honour to the expedition, and must, when the facts became known, have been deeply deplored by instructed French people. Flinders was working at his own complete map of Australia in his miserable prison at Mauritius while his splendidly won credit was being filched from him; and it was merely the misfortune that placed him in the power of General Decaen that debarred him from issuing what should have been the first finished outline of the vast island which he had been the earliest to circumnavigate. Historically the Carte Generale is interesting, but no honour attaches to it.

Yet full praise must be given to Louis de Freycinet for the charts issued by him. He drew them largely from material prepared by others, and much of that material, as we have seen, was rough and poor. As a piece of artistic workmanship, the folio of charts issued by Freycinet in 1812 was a fine performance, and fairly earned for him the command of the expedition entrusted to him by the Government of Louis XVIII. Before the volume was published by the order of Napoleon, it was submitted by the Minister of Marine to Vice-Admiral Rosily, Director-General du Depot de la Marine. That officer's report* (* Printed in the Moniteur, January 15, 1813.) gave an account of the work which Freycinet had done not only in the drawing but in regard to the actual engraving of the charts. "M. Freycinet," said the Vice-Admiral, "who has done the principal part of this work, was more capable than any one else known to us of accomplishing such a result. It is to him that we owe the preparation of this fine atlas. He has neglected no means of giving to it the last

degree of perfection. He has himself made the drawings of the charts and plans, and then he has reproduced them upon the copper-plates, and has engraved the scales of latitude and longitude by a new method perfected by himself, and which assures the exactitude of his work. The beauty of the engravings, and the execution of the work in general, leave nothing to be desired, and testify to the care that he has devoted to make the collection of charts one of the most useful of works in promoting the progress of hydrography."

The praise thus officially bestowed upon Freycinet's work will be felt to be deserved by any one who studies the atlas of 1812; but admiration of the workmanship will not commit the careful student to an equally cordial opinion concerning the completeness and accuracy of the charts as representations of the coasts traversed by the expedition. The south coast--the most important part, since here the field was entirely fresh--was very faulty in outline, and in other parts where Baudin's vessels had opportunities for doing complete work, important features were missed. And at the back of it all there looms the shadow of Matthew Flinders, the merit of whose own work shines out all the brighter for the contrast.* (* A remarkable example of the way to avoid difficult questions by ignoring them is afforded by Girard's book on Peron, which, throughout its 278 pages, contains no reference whatever to Flinders. It devotes forty pages to the voyage, but absolutely suppresses all reference to the Encounter Bay incident, the imprisonment of Flinders, and other questions concerning him. Yet Girard's book was "couronne par la Societe d'emulation de d'Allier." There should have been some "rosemary, that's for remembrance," in the crown.)

CHAPTER 12. CONCLUSIONS AND CONSEQUENCES.

Further consideration of Napoleon's purposes.
What Australia owes to British sea power.
Influence of the Napoleonic wars.
Fresh points relative to Napoleon's designs.
Absence of evidence.
Consequences of suspicions of French intentions.
Promotion of settlement in Tasmania.
Tardy occupation of Port Phillip.
The Swan River Settlement.
The Westernport scheme.
Lord John Russell's claim of "the Whole" of Australia for the British.
The designs of Napoleon III.
Australia the nursling of sea power.

The question of paramount interest connected with the events considered in the foregoing pages is whether or not the expedition of 1800 to 1804 had a political purpose. It is hoped that the examination to which the facts have been subjected has been sufficient to show that it had not. It was promoted by an academic organisation of learned men for scientific objects; it was not an isolated effort, but one of a series made by the French, which had their counterpart in several expeditions despatched by the British, for the collection of data and the solution of problems of

importance to science; its equipment and personnel showed it to be what it professed to be; and the work it did, open to serious criticism as it is in several aspects, indicated that purposes within the scope of the Institute of France, and not those with which diplomacy and politics were concerned, were kept in view throughout. So much, it is claimed, has been demonstrated. But the whole case is not exhausted in what has been written; and in this final chapter will be briefly set forth a sequence of reasons which go to show that Bonaparte in 1800 had no thought of founding a new fatherland for the French in Australasia, or of establishing upon the great southern continent a rival settlement to that of the British at Port Jackson.

It may legitimately be suggested that though all the French expeditions enumerated in a previous chapter, including Baudin's, were promoted for purposes of discovery, the rulers of France were not without hope that profit would spring from them in the shape of rich territories or fields for French exploitation. It is, indeed, extremely likely that such was the case. Governments, being political organisations, are swayed chiefly by political considerations, or at any rate are largely affected by them. When Prince Henry the Navigator fitted out the caravels that crept timidly down the west coast of Africa, penetrating farther and farther into the unknown, until a new ocean and new realms at length opened upon the view he was inspired by the ideal of spreading the Christian religion and of gaining knowledge about the shape of the world for its own sake; but he was none the less desirous of securing augmented wealth and dominion for Portugal.* (* See Beazley, Henry the Navigator pages 139 to 141; and E.J. Payne, in Cambridge Modern History 1 10 to 15.) It was not solely for faith and science that he:

"Heaven inspired,
To love of useful glory roused mankind
And in unbounded commerce mixed the world."

Isabella of Castile did not finance Columbus purely for the glory of discovery. Luis de Santangel and Alonso de Quintanilla, who prevailed upon her to befriend the daring Genoese, not only used the argument that the voyage would present an opportunity of "spreading her holy religion," but also that it would "replenish her treasury chests."* (* Justin Winsor, Christopher Columbus page 178.) It is as natural for the statesman to hope for political advantage as for the man of science to look for scientific rewards, the geographer for geographical results, the merchant for extended scope for commerce, from any enterprise of the kind in which the State concerns itself. It would have been a perfectly proper aspiration on the part of French statesmen to seek for opportunities of development in a region as yet scarcely touched by European energy. But there is no more reason for attributing this motive to Bonaparte in 1800, than to the Ministers of Louis XV and Louis XVI, or to the Government of France during the Revolution: and that is the point.

It is to misinterpret the character of the Napoleon Bonaparte who ruled the Republic in the early period of the Consulate, to suppose him incapable of wishing to promote research for its own sake. He desired the glory of his era to depend upon other achievements than those of war. "My

intention certainly is," he said to Thibaudeau, "to multiply the works of peace. It may be that in the future I shall be better known by them than by my victories." The Memoires of the shrewd observer to whom the words were uttered, give us perhaps a more intimate acquaintance with the Consular Bonaparte than does any other single book; and it is impossible to study them without deriving the impression that he was at this time far more than a great soldier. He was, faults notwithstanding, a very noble and high-minded man. It was easy for the savants of the Institute to show him what a fine field for enterprise there was in the South Seas; and though there is not a shred of evidence to indicate that, in acquiescing in the proposition, he yielded to any other impulse than that of securing for France the glory of discovery, there may yet have been at the back of his mind, so to speak, the idea that if good fortune attended the effort, the French nation might profit otherwise than in repute. To say so much, however, is not to admit that there is any justification for thinking that the acquisition of dominion furnished a direct motive for the expedition. If Bonaparte entertained such a notion he kept it to himself. There is not a trace of it in his correspondence, or in the memoirs of those who were intimate with him at this period. One cannot say what thoughts took shape at the back of a mind like Napoleon's, nor how far he was looking ahead in anything that he did. One can only judge from the evidence available. On some of Flinders' charts there are dotted lines to indicate coasts which he had not been able to explore fully. He would not set down as a statement of fact what he had not verified. History, too, has its dotted lines, where supposition fills up gaps for which we have no certain information. There is no harm in them; there is some advantage. But we had better take care that they remain dotted lines until we can ink them over with certainty, and not mistake a possibly wrong guess for a fact.

It is also necessary to distinguish between the exalted motives of which we may think the First Consul capable in 1800, and for a year or two after, and the use he would have made five, eight, or ten years later of any opportunities of damaging the possessions and the prestige of Great Britain. In the full tide of his passionate hatred against the nation that mocked and blocked and defied him at every turn of his foreign policy, he would unquestionably have been delighted to seize any opportunity of striking a blow at British power anywhere. He kept Decaen at Mauritius in the hope that events might favour an attempt on India. He would have used discoveries made in Australasia, as he would have used Fulton's steamboat in 1807, to injure his enemy, could he have done so effectually. But to do that involved the possession of great naval strength, and the services of an admiral fit to meet upon the high seas that slim, one-armed, one-eyed man whose energy and genius were equal to a fleet of frigates to the dogged nation whose hero he was; and in both these requirements the Emperor was deficient.

Indeed, we can scarcely realise how much Australia owes to Britain's overwhelming strength upon the blue water at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But for that, not only France but other European powers would surely have claimed the right to establish themselves upon the continent. The proportion of it which the English occupied at the time was proportionately no more than a fly-speck upon a window pane. She

could not colonise the whole of it, and the small portion that she was using was a mere convict settlement. Almost any other place would have done equally well for such a purpose. It needed some tremendous exertion of strength to enable her to maintain exclusive possession of a whole continent, such as Spain had vainly professed regarding America in the sixteenth century. From the point of view of Australian "unity, peace, and concord," the Napoleonic wars were an immense blessing, however great an infliction they may have been to old Europe. In an age of European tranquillity, it is pretty certain that foreign colonisation in Australia would not have been resisted. Great Britain would not have risked a war with a friendly power concerning a very distant land, the value and potentialities of which were far from being immediately obvious. The Englishman, however, is tremendously assertive when threatened. He will fight to the last gasp to keep what he really does not want very much, if only he supposes that his enemy wishes to take a bit of it. It was in that spirit of pugnacity that he stretched a large muscular hand over the whole map of Australia, and defied his foes to touch it. Before the great struggle it would have been quite possible to think of colonising schemes in the southern hemisphere without seriously contemplating the danger of collision with the British. But the end of the Napoleonic wars left the power and prestige of Great Britain upon the sea unchallengeable, and her possessions out of Europe were placed beyond assail. This position was fairly established before Napoleon could have made any serious attempt to annoy or injure the English settlement in Australia. Traced back to decisive causes, the ownership of Australia was determined on October 21, 1805, when the planks of the Victory were reddened with the life-blood of Nelson.

The remaining points to be considered are the following.

The Treaty of Amiens was negotiated and signed in 1801 and 1802, while Baudin’s expedition was at sea. Had Napoleon desired to secure a slice of Australia for the French, here was his opportunity to proclaim what he wanted. Had he done so, we can have no reasonable doubt that he would have found the British Government compliant. His Majesty’s Ministers were in a concessionary mood. By that treaty Great Britain surrendered all her maritime conquests of recent wars, except Trinidad and Ceylon. She gave up the Cape, Demerara, Berbice, Essequibo, Surinam, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Minorca, and Malta.* (* Cambridge Modern History 9 75 et seq; Brodrick and Fotheringham, Political History of England 11 9 et seq.) She was eagerly desirous for peace. Bread was dear, and England seethed with discontent. Napoleon was fully aware that he was in a position to force concessions. King George’s advisers were limp. "England," wrote Thibaudeau, who knew his master’s mind, "was driven by sheer necessity to make peace; not so Bonaparte, whose reasons were founded on the desire of the French nation for peace, the fact that the terms of the treaty were glorious for France, and the recognition by his bitterest enemy of the position which the nation had bestowed upon him."* (* Fortescue’s English edition page 18.) The value of Australia at this time was scarcely perceived by Great Britain at all. Sydney was just a tip for human refuse, and a cause of expense, not of profit or advantage. The only influential man in England who believed in a future for the country was Sir Joseph Banks; and he, in 1799, had written to Governor Hunter: "The

situation of Europe is at present so critical, and His Majesty's Ministers so fully employed in business of the highest importance, that it is scarce possible to gain a moment's audience on any subject but those which stand foremost in their minds, and colonies of all kinds, you may be assured, are now put in the background...Your colony is a most valuable appendage to Great Britain, and I flatter myself we shall, before it is long, see her Ministers made sensible of its real value."* (* Banks to Hunter, February 1, 1799. Historical Records of New South Wales 3 532.) If that was the feeling in 1799, we can imagine how a claim to the right to found a French settlement in Australia during the nerveless regime of Addington would have been received. It would not have delayed the signing of the Treaty of Amiens by one hour. England at that time would not have risked a frigate or spent an ounce of powder on resisting such a demand. But the subject does not appear to have been even mentioned during the negotiations.

Nor was it mentioned by Napoleon during the years of his captivity at St. Helena. He talked about his projects, his failures, his successes, with O'Meara, Montholon, Las Cases, Admiral Malcolm, Antommarchi, Gourgaud, and others. Australia and the Baudin expedition were never discussed, though Surgeon O'Meara knew all about Flinders' imprisonment, and mentioned it incidentally in a footnote to illustrate the hardships brought upon innocent non-belligerents during the Napoleonic wars. Indeed, an interesting passage in O'Meara's Napoleon at Saint Helena* (* Edition of 1888, 2 129.) causes a doubt as to whether Napoleon had a clear recollection of the Flinders case at all. It is true that General Decaen's aide-de-camp had mentioned it to him in 1804, and that Banks had written to him on the subject; but he had many larger matters to occupy him, and possibly gave no more than passing thought to it. O'Meara records that among Napoleon's visitors at the rock was an Englishman, Mr. Manning, who was travelling in France for the benefit of his health in 1805. He had been arrested, but on writing to Napoleon stating his case, was released. He mentioned the incident in the course of the conversation, and expressed his gratitude. "What protection had you?" asked Napoleon. "Had you a letter from Sir Joseph Banks to me?" Manning replied that he had no letter from any one, but that Napoleon had ordered his release without the intervention of any influential person. The occurrence of Banks's name to Napoleon's memory in connection with an application for the release of a traveller may indicate that a reminiscence of the Flinders case lingered in the mind of the illustrious exile. So much cannot, however, be stated positively, because Flinders was not the only prisoner in behalf of whom the President of the Royal Society had interested himself, though his was the only case which attracted a very large amount of public attention. But what is chiefly significant is the absence of any reference to Australia and Baudin's expedition in the St. Helena conversations, in which the whole field of Napoleonic policy was traversed with amplitude.

Had the selection of a site for settlement, rather than research, been intended, it seems most likely that Napoleon, with his trained eye for strategic advantages, would have directed particular if not exclusive attention to be paid to the north coast of Australia. If he had taken the map in hand and studied it with a view to obtaining a favourable

position, he would probably have put his finger upon the part of the coast where Port Darwin is situated, and would have said, "Search carefully just there: see if a harbour can be discovered which may be used as a base." The coast was entirely unoccupied; the French might have established themselves securely before the British knew what they had done; and had they found and fortified Port Darwin, they would have captured the third point of a triangle--the other two being Mauritius and Pondicherry--which might have made them very powerful in the Indian Ocean. And that is precisely what the East India Company's directors feared that Napoleon intended. One of them, the Hon. C.F. Greville, wrote to Brown, the naturalist of the Investigator, "I hope the French ships of discovery will not station themselves on the north coast of New Holland";* (* January 4, 1802. Historical Records of New South Wales 4 677.) and the Company, recognising their own interest in the matter, voted six hundred pounds as a present to the captain, staff, and crew of the Investigator before she sailed from England. But instead of what was feared, the French ships devoted principal attention to the south, where there was original geographical work to do--a natural course, their object being discovery, but not what might have been expected had their real design been acquisition. Peron censured Baudin because he examined part of the west coast before proceeding to the unknown south; and when at length Le Geographe did sail north, the work done there was very perfunctory. Baudin himself was no fighting man; nor was there with the expedition a military engineer or any officer capable of reporting upon strategic situations, or competent to advise as to the establishment of a fort or a colony. Captain Hamelin and Lieutenant Henri de Freycinet afterwards saw active service with the Navy, but the staff knew more about flowers, beetles, butterflies, and rocks than about fortifications and colonisation.

In recent years research has concentrated powerful rays of light on the intricacies of Napoleonic policy. Archives have been thrown open, ransacked, catalogued and codified. Memoirs by the score, letters by the hundred, have been published. Documents by the thousand have been studied. A battalion of eager students have handled this vast mass of material. The piercing minds of eminent scholars have drilled into it to elucidate problems incidental to Napoleon's era. But nothing has been brought to light which indicates that Australia was within the radius of his designs.

The idea that the publication of the Terre Napoleon maps, with their unfounded pretensions to discoveries, was a move on Napoleon's part towards asserting a claim upon territory in Australia, is surely untenable by any one with any appreciation of the irony of circumstances.

No man in history had a deeper realisation of the dynamics of empire than Napoleon had. A nation, as he well knew, holds its possessions by the power behind its grasp. If he had wanted a slice of Australia, and had been able to take and hold it, of what political use to him would have been a few maps, even with an eagle's picture on one of them? When his unconquerable legions brought Italy under his sway, absorbed the Low Countries, and established his dominion on the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Danube, he based no claims on maps and documents. He took because he

could. An empire is not like a piece of suburban property, based on title-deeds drawn by a family solicitor. Its validity is founded on forces--the forces of ships, armies, manhood, treaties, funds, national goodwill, sound government, commercial enterprise, all the forces that make for solidity, resistance, permanence. Freycinet's maps would have been of no more use to Napoleon in getting a footing in Australia than a postage stamp would be in shifting one of the pyramids. He was capable of many mean things, but we gravely undervalue his capacity for seeing to the heart of a problem if we suppose him both mean and silly enough to conspire to cheat Matthew Flinders out of his well and hardly won honours, on the supposition that the maps would help him to assert a claim upon Australia. He could have made good no such claim in the teeth of British opposition without sea power; and that he had not.

The consequences of the suspicion that Napoleon intended to seize a site in Australia, were, however, quite as important as if he had formally announced his intention of doing so. What men believe to be true, not what is true, determines their action; and there was quite enough in the circumstances that occurred to make Governor King and his superiors in England resolve upon decisive action. King having communicated his beliefs to Ministers, Lord Hobart, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, in June 1803, wrote a despatch in which he authorised the colonisation of Van Diemen's Land by the removal of part of the establishment at Norfolk Island to Port Dalrymple--"the advantageous position of which, upon the southern coast of Van Diemen's Land, and near the entrance of Bass Straits, renders it, in a political view, particularly necessary that a settlement should be formed there."* (* See Backhouse Walker, Early Tasmania page 22.) It will be observed that the Secretary of State's geographical knowledge of the countries under his regime was quite remarkable. A man who should describe Glasgow as being on the southern coast of England, near the eastern entrance of the Channel, would be just about as near the truth as Lord Hobart managed to get.* (* Froude's amusing story of Lord Palmerston, when, on forming a Ministry, he thought he would have to take the Secretaryship of State for the Colonies himself, comes to mind. He said to Sir Arthur Helps, "Come upstairs with me, Helps; we will look at the maps, and you shall show me where these places are." Froude's Oceana page 12.)

King moved immediately. He despatched the Lady Nelson and the Albion on August 31 to establish a settlement on the river Derwent, with Lieutenant John Bowen in charge; and in September 1803 the first British colony in Tasmania was planted. It had a variety of adverse experiences before at length the beautiful site of the city of Hobart, at the foot of Mount Wellington, was determined upon; but here, at all events, was a beginning, and the tale from that time forward has been one of steady progress.

As soon as the imagined threat of French invasion lost its impulsion, the colonising energy of the governing authorities subsided. The Tasmanian settlement remained and grew, but Trafalgar removed all fear of foreign interference. Hence it was that nearly forty years elapsed before any real effort was made to settle the lands within Port Phillip. Then the first energies that were devoted towards creating the great state of

Victoria were not directed by the Government, which no longer had any political motive for forcing matters, but were made by enterprising stock-owners searching for pastures. It was not till 1835 that John Batman pushed up the river Yarra, found the site of the present city of Melbourne, and said, "This will be the place for a village!" Trafalgar and the security which it gave to British possessions oversea made all the difference between the early occupation of Tasmania for fear the French should take it, and the leisurely and non-official settlement of the Port Phillip district, when it was quite certain that no foreign power could set a foot upon it without British permission.

There was one other occasion when the recurrence of French exploring ships in Australian waters revived the idea that foreign settlement on some portion of the continent was contemplated. just as the appearance of Baudin's expedition at the commencement of the century expedited the colonisation of Tasmania, and prompted a tentative occupation of Port Phillip, so the renewed activity of the French in the South Seas during the years 1820 to 1826, was the immediate cause of the foundation of the Swan River Settlement (1829), the nucleus of the present state of Western Australia. Steps were also taken to form an establishment at Westernport, where, on the arrival of H.M.S. Fly with two brigs conveying troops, evidences were found showing that the French navigators had already paid a call, without, however, making any movement in the direction of "effective occupation." The Swan River Settlement grew, but the Westernport expedition packed up its kit and returned to Sydney when the alarm subsided.

There is perhaps some warrant for believing that the French Government, when it sent out Freycinet in the Uranie and the Physicienne from 1817 to 1820, and the Baron de Bougainville in the Esperance and the Thetis from 1824 to 1826, desired to collect information with a possible view to colonise in some part of Australasia; though the fear that these commanders were themselves commissioned to "plant" a colony was quite absurd, and the express exploratory purpose of their voyages was abundantly justified by results. Lord John Russell, in after years, related that "during my tenure of the Colonial office, a gentleman attached to the French Government called upon me. He asked how much of Australia was claimed as the dominion of Great Britain. I answered, 'The whole,' and with that answer he went away."* (* Russell's Recollections and Suggestions (1875) page 203.) Lord John Russell was at the head of the Colonial Office in the second Melbourne Administration, 1839 to 1841, a long time after the French explorers had gone home and published the histories of their voyages. But it is still quite possible that the researches made by Freycinet and the Baron de Bougainville prompted the inquiry of the Colonial Secretary's visitor. The phrase, "a gentleman attached to the French Government," is rather vague. The question was clearly not asked by the French Ambassador, or it would have been addressed to the Foreign Secretary, who at that time was Lord Palmerston, and whose reply would certainly not have fallen short of Lord John's, either in emphasis or distinctness. It may well be, however, that the Government of King Louis Philippe--whose chief advisers during the period were Thiers (1839 to 1840) and Guizot (from July 1840)--desired to make their inquiry in a semi-official manner to avoid causing offence.

Yet the fact cannot escape notice, that at this particular time the French were busily laying the foundation of that new colonial dominion with which they have persevered, with admirable results, since the collapse of their oversea power during Napoleon's regime. Though their aptitude for colonisation had been "unhappily rendered sterile by the faults of their European policy,"* (* Fallot, L'Avenir Colonial de la France page 4.) the more far-seeing among their statesmen and publicists did not lose sight of the ideal of creating a new field for the diffusion of French civilisation. They commenced in 1827 that colonising enterprise in Algiers which has converted "a sombre and redoubtable barbarian coast" into "a twin sister of the Riviera of Nice, charming as she, upon the other side of the Mediterranean."* (* Hanotaux, L'Energie Francaise (1902) page 284.)

Lord John Russell was not likely to be regardless of this movement, nor unaware of the strongly marked current of opinion in France in favour of expansion.

Twenty years later Lord John Russell had the position of Australia, as a factor in world politics, brought under his notice again, through a document to which he evidently attached importance, and which is still the legitimate subject of historical curiosity. He was then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the second Palmerston Administration (1859 to 1865). A great change had meanwhile taken place affecting the economic value of this large island in the South Seas. Apart from the growth of its commerce and the productive capacity of its great fertile areas, the gold discoveries of the early fifties--the nuggets of Ballarat and the rich auriferous gravels of wide belts of country--had turned the eyes of the world towards the land of whose agricultural and mineral resources so little had been previously known. France, too, had passed through a new series of changes in her very mutable modern history, and a Bonaparte once more occupied the throne, as Napoleon III.

One day the British Foreign Minister received, from a source of which we know nothing--but the Foreign Office in the Palmerstonian epoch was exceedingly well informed--a communication which, having read, he did not deposit among the official documents at Downing Street, but carefully sealed up and placed among his own private papers. His biographer, Sir Spencer Walpole, tells us all that is at present known about this mysterious piece of writing. "There is still among Lord John's papers," he says, "a simple document which purports to be a translation of a series of confidential questions issued by Napoleon III on the possibility of a French expedition, secretly collected in different ports, invading, conquering, and holding Australia. How the paper reached the Foreign Office, what credit was attached to it, what measures were suggested by it, there is no evidence to show. This only is certain. Lord John dealt with it as he occasionally dealt with confidential papers which he did not think it right to destroy, but which he did not wish to be known. He enclosed it in an envelope, sealed it with his own seal, and addressed it to himself. It was so found after his death."* (* Walpole, Life of Lord John Russell 2 177.)

Oddly enough, the period within which Lord John received the piece of information which he carefully kept to himself in the manner described, corresponds with that of the most notorious effort of Napoleon III to assert his power beyond the confines of Europe.

In 1853, the year after the establishment of the second Empire, the Government of Napoleon III had annexed New Caledonia, commencing on this island the policy of transportation in the very year in which Great Britain ceased to send convicts to Australia. Thus for the first time did France secure a footing in the South. This was a safe step to take, as the annexation was performed with the concurrence of Great Britain. But Napoleon's oversea move of nine years later was rash in the extreme.

From 1862 to 1866--after a joint Anglo-French-Spanish movement to compel the Republic of Mexico to discharge her debts to European bondholders, and after a disagreement between the allies which led to the withdrawal of the British and the Spaniards--forty thousand French troops were engaged upon the quixotic task of disciplining Mexican opinion, suppressing civil war, and imposing upon the people an unwelcome and absurd sovereign in the person of Maximilian of Austria. His throne endured as long as the French battalions remained to support it. When they withdrew, Maximilian was deposed, court-marshalled, and shot. The wild folly of the Mexican enterprise, from which France had nothing to gain, illustrated in an expensive form the unbalanced judgment and the soaring megalomaniac propensities of "the man of December." That he should institute such inquiries as are indicated by the document described by Lord John Russell's biographer, even though the preservation of friendly relations with Great Britain was essential to him, was quite in accordance with the "somewhat crafty" character of the man of whom a contemporary French historian has said: "He knew how to keep his own counsel, how to brood over a design, and how to reveal it suddenly when he felt that his moment had come."* (* M. Albert Thomas in Cambridge Modern History 11 287.) It is a little singular, however, that Russell did not allude to the mysterious paper when he wrote his Recollections and Suggestions, five years after the fall of Napoleon III. There was no imperative need for secrecy then, and the passage quoted from his book indicates that the welfare of Australia was under his consideration.

The facts set forth in the preceding pages are sufficient to show that the people of no portion of the British Empire have greater reason to be grateful for the benefits conferred by the naval strength maintained by the mother country, during the past one hundred years, than have those who occupy Australia. Their country has indeed been, in a special degree, the nursling of sea power. By naval predominance, and that alone, the way has been kept clear for the unimpeded development, on British constitutional lines, of a group of flourishing states forming "one continent-isle," whose bounds are "the girdling seas alone."

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