

PHANTOM ISLES OF THE PACIFIC

Hundreds of Illusions Charted as Land.

The Hydrographic Department of the British Admiralty recently erased from the charts a group in the South Pacific known as the Royal Company's Islands. Every one of those large projections of the world showing the boundlessness of the British Empire contains the name Royal Company's Islands attached to several dots south of Tasmania. Not only is the name there, but to prevent any misunderstanding or covetousness there is usually printed under the name a thick red line to indicate that the territory is British. But they are not British, or American, or anything else but a fiction, and hereafter the big empire will be smaller by the loss of several islands.

About the same time the British were removing the Royal Company's Islands with a penknife, the United States was sending out the cruiser Tacoma to search, during the practice cruise to Hawaii, for another island which is charted on the tracks between San Francisco and the Sand-

ward heard of. The presumption is that she has gone on one of the hidden reefs that are not yet marked or are incorrectly charted.

It was not long after the chart of the reported dangers to navigation in the Pacific had been issued before more information was brought, in one way or another, to the Hydrographic Office, and by 1896 this information had increased to such an extent that the chart became almost valueless, and it also showed the impracticability of issuing another chart. A volume was then published giving all the details that had come to the knowledge of the office. In five years a new edition, taking note only of the North Pacific, was published.

In this volume there are described nearly 1,200 "dangers" reported in the Pacific north of the equator, and the greater number of the "dangers" are mentioned as "islands," of which subsequent inquiry has shown that the majority are as fabulous as the Island of Antillia or as Jacquet Island.

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OLD FAVORITES

Comin' Thro' the Rye.
Gin a body meet a body,
Comin' thro' the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?

Chorus:
Ilka lassie has her liddle,
Ne'er a ane ha'e I;
But all the lads they love me weel,
And what the waur am I?

Gin a body meet a body,
Comin' frae the well,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body tell?—Chorus.

Gin a body meet a body,
Comin' frae the town,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body frown?—Chorus.

Ilka Jennie has her Jockey,
Ne'er a ane ha'e I;
But all the lads they love me weel,
And what the waur am I?—Chorus.

The Little Church Round the Corner.
"Bring him not here where our sainted feet

Are treading the path to glory;
Bring him not here where our Saviour sweet

Repeats, for us, His story.
Go, take him where 'such things' are done—

For he sat in the seat of the scorner—
To where they have room, for we have none,
To the little church round the corner."

So spake the holy man of God
Of another man, his brother,
Whose cold remains, ere they sought the sod,
Had only asked that a Christian rite
Might be read above them by one whose light

Was, "Brethren, love one another;"
Had only asked that a prayer be read
Ere his flesh went down to join the dead.

Whilst his spirit looked with suppliant eyes,
Searching for God throughout the skies.
But the priest frowned "No," and his brow was bare
Of love in the sight of the mourner,
And they looked for Christ and found Him—where?
In that little church round the corner!

Ah, well! God grant, when, with aching feet,
We tread life's last few paces,
That we may hear some accents sweet,
And kiss, to the end, fond faces!

God grant that this tired flesh may rest,
(Mid many a musing mourner)
While the sermon is preached, and the rites are read,
In no church where the heart of love is dead,
And the pastor a pious prig at best,
But in some small nook where God's confessed—

Some little church round the corner!
—A. E. Lancaster.

Errors in Diet.
Dr. Robert Hutchinson, in a recent lecture at the London Institute, called attention to some of the errors in the national diet. His criticisms and recommendations will apply equally well to America. He says: "We none of us seem to eat quite the right things, at any rate not for the right reasons. The great mistake is that we are led away by mere flavor. American cheese, at sixpence a pound, is dietetically as good as Stilton at one shilling and fourpence. The bloater yields rather more nutriment than the sole or the salmon. Margarine is quite as nourishing and as digestible as butter. Comparing the values of different articles of diet, Dr. Hutchinson said that vegetable foods were, on the whole, not so easily digested as animal foods. It would be a great mistake for a town population to live entirely on the former, even if town digestions were better than they are. At the same time he thought we could all with advantage eat more of the pulses, such as peas, beans and lentils. Dietetic salvation, he said, was not to be found in brown bread. On paper brown bread was superior to white, but the whole of it was not absorbed. "No, believe me," said the lecturer, "the instinct for white bread is a sound instinct." As to oatmeal, it was rich in building material, and in fact, in iron and in phosphates. It was nonsense to say that oatmeal was the cause of appendicitis and other evils. If it were, the Scotch nation would have perished centuries ago.

A Negro and English.
You are almost an octogenarian, sah," said the semi-educated, young, yellow negro, pompously.

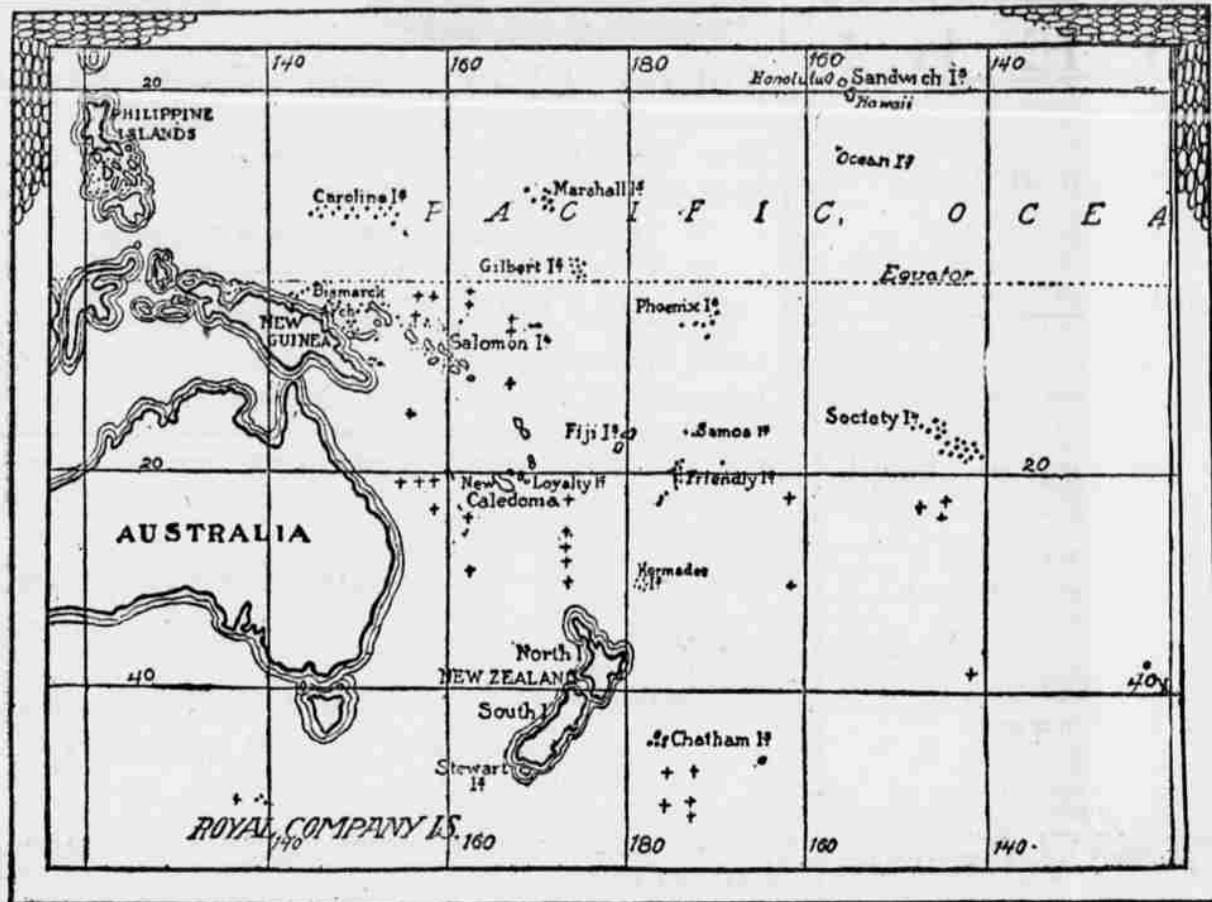
"Wha-wha's dat yo' says?" snapped the venerable but unlettered darkey.

"I specified, sah, that you are almost an octogenarian."

"Well, don' yo' do it ag'n, boy, or I'll done bust yo' head wid my stick—yo' heads my prognostication?"

A woman who was lately divorced is quoted as saying: "There are too many men in the world to be unhappy with one of them."

Ever remark how timidly and hesitatingly a bald-headed man takes off his hat?



SOME OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS WHOSE EXISTENCE IS DOUBTED ARE MARKED+.

wich Islands, but which, there seems every reason to believe, is as much a phantom as the Royal Company's Islands.

These are only two recent incidents connected with the fictitious islands of the Pacific, which ocean seems to be the favorite with those skippers who see land in the broad expanse of water which is never again seen, although the Atlantic in earlier years furnished perhaps as many examples



WHALE SOMETIMES THOUGHT A REEF.

of illusions, being jotted down in ships' logs as islands, reefs and shoals. It is largely on account of these reports of fabulous spots of land sprinkled over oceans that hydrographic departments are a very necessary part of the government of every maritime nation.

The Atlantic, being the first great ocean highway frequently used and also being of lesser extent than the Pacific, was the first to have its fabulous islands dissipated. The Island of Antillia, called Heptapolis by Mercator a century later, clung on to the maps with great tenacity almost down to the nineteenth century. Antillia, or the seven cities, was not only put down as an established material fact, but it was given a population. According to the stories then believed, the Spanish, driven out by the Moors, had taken possession. If the island ever had an existence, there is nothing now to prove it. There were also several other equally popular and equally fabulous islands in the Atlantic, which navigators after the Middle Ages proved to be existing only in the lively imagination of a darker time. One of these was the island of the Irish Saint Brandon, belief in which

England and France and in various parts of the Mediterranean a cable to connect both sides of the Atlantic was naturally considered.

The stretch was about 3,000 miles, and there was doubt as to the practicability of the scheme. While the discussion was going on, in the later 40s, the proposition was put forward that by making a landing on Jacquet Island, a good deal of difficulty could be avoided. Jacquet Island then came in for a good deal of prominence, and that was its undoing. A little investigation proved Jacquet Island to be a myth, and the Atlantic cable was laid on the bottom of the ocean from one continent to the other without the relay intended. Notwithstanding this terrible fall from power, the mythical spot remained on many maps until comparatively recent date.

So numerous became recently discovered islands, reefs and shoals in the Pacific that in 1857 the United States Hydrographic Office prepared a register chart of these "dangers to navigation." The reason they were so called was because of the uncertainty of the existence of many of them. Having been reported they were presumed to exist, and, although some of them were never again visible, they remained on the chart, for were they genuine and not noted on the navigation charts a vessel might strike one at night or on a misty day and go to the bottom. That many of the islands do exist seems to be evident from the fact that every little while a ship is lost and never after-

sional addenda printed and distributed, and in the Hydrographic Office a draughtsman is almost constantly employed erasing phantoms which have been unveiled, and putting down new "islands" which may in turn prove to be fabulous. Within the last four years more than twenty-five mythological land spots in the Pacific have been taken off the charts, and about as many more have been added.

One of the latest reports received by the office is dated Bremen, April 10. It is given as a specimen of the fragmentary way in which these reports are received: "The Prinz Waldemar Waitman, on the voyage from Banda to Berlinhafen, reports at 6:40 a. m. on Dec. 17, in latitude 1 degree 22 minutes south, longitude 130 degrees 30 minutes east, saw a reef under water estimated to extend half a sea mile from S. S. W. to N. N. E., about 100 meters broad." Straightway this is entered on the records and placed on the chart, for if it really does exist it is a menace to navigation. It is something to be on the lookout for, yet in a year or two it may be reported as a myth, or in a different position.

The question naturally arises, "How comes it that mythological islands are reported? How can any one see an island that has no existence?" To the landsman it appears inexplicable, but to the sailor the explanation is simplicity itself.

At times there appear in the sea long, dark patches or bright, yellowish patches, which at a distance give

the mariner the impression of shoals. Looking on his chart he finds none charted in that neighborhood and, consequently, enters his discovery in his log. When he reaches port he gives information, which finally finds its way to the Hydrographic Office of his government, and then to all the others throughout the world. Sometimes a tired whale will float lazily on the bosom of the deep, and at a distance appears to the man on the bridge as a reef or, perhaps, as a distant island. A school of fish will stir up the water or change its hue, and the wide-awake sailor may see in it one of those "dangers to navigation," which will live for a time on a chart with the embarrassing letters "E. D." opposite the entry, meaning its existence is doubted. A tide rip often is mistaken for breakers, and is another of the things responsible for the 2,500 phantoms which appear on the books of the Hydrographic Office.

Disagreement in Charts.
Another explanation for mistakes which were formerly made by ships' masters, especially in the East India archipelago, is the disagreement in longitude of the Netherlands government charts and those of other nations. This difference, which amounted to five or six minutes, and occasionally more, was rectified about twenty-five years ago, when the Netherlands government adopted the same longitude as the British Admiralty. The rectification was not complete, however, and there are still many duplications of shoals and other dangers on the charts, having been reported by different navigators using the charts of their respective nations.

Once a fabulous island gets a footing, so to speak, on one of the navigation charts, it is the most difficult thing in the world to get it off. One case in point is sufficient. In 1801 the ship Nautilus reported the discovery of an island at 8.35 S., 167.47 E., or about the middle of the Southern Pacific. Not only was it reported as a fact, but the information was accompanied with the superfluous supposition that "it is uninhabited." On the strength of this assertion it was considered the genuine article, but it was believed its position was doubtful. Its longitude was given as 167 degrees .05 minute, and this was said to be a mistake. As it subsequently proved, the whole island was a mistake. The ship Carola in 1883 made a search for it for a distance sixty miles east and west of its assigned position, and at a east of the lead to seventy-five fathoms found no bottom. In 1898 the fable was destroyed by being erased.

There is nearly always some vessel in the United States navy employed in making and correcting surveys. The mass of material thus collected for the Hydrographic Office is of the greatest possible service. The coast is, of course, the principal object of attention to these surveying parties, but on the Pacific they often cruise long distances in search of islands or shoals or reefs reported at various times. In this way more phantoms have been explained away than in any other. While the ordinary mariner does not take time to investigate the things he sees, or believes he sees, the survey expedition examines critically. In nine cases out of ten they sail over the spot where the fabulous island is said to have been seen, and generally find their dead line is too short to touch bottom. For some unknown reason these islands of the imagination persist in selecting that part of the ocean where depth is greatest, when they might have done better when they might have done better is "one of those things no fellow can find out."

BOB WHITE VALUABLE.

Probably Most Useful and Abundant Species on Farms.

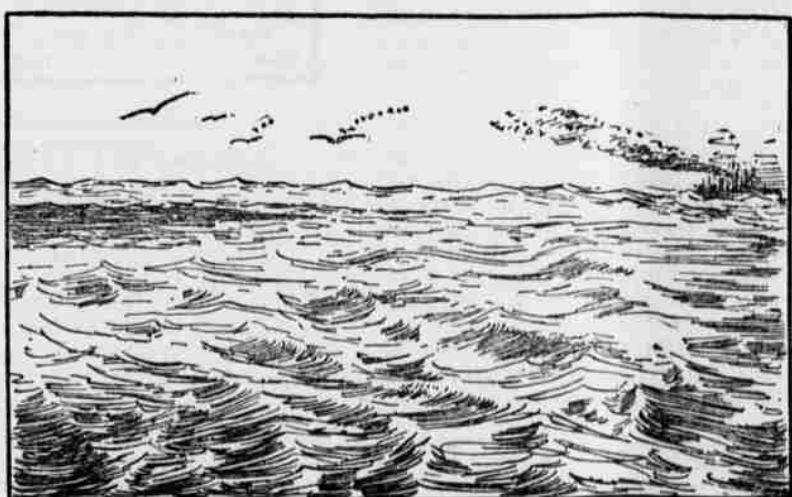
The ornithologists of the Department of Agriculture have been making an investigation of the economy value of the Bob White, as a result of which it is announced that the bird is "probably the most useful abundant species on the farms."

Field observations, experiments and examinations show that it consumes large quantities of weed seeds and destroys many of the worst insect pests with which farmers contend, and yet it does not injure grain, fruit, or any other crop.

It is figured that from Sept. 1 to April 30 annually in Virginia alone the total consumption of weed seed by Bob Whites amounts to 573 tons. Some of the pests which it habitually destroys, the report says, are the Mexican cotton boll weevil, which damages the cotton crop to the extent of more than \$15,000,000 a year; the potato beetle, which cuts off \$10,000,000 from the value of the potato crop; the cotton worms, which have been known to cause \$30,000,000 loss in a year; the chinch bug and the Rocky Mountain locust, scourges which leave desolation in their path and have caused losses aggregating \$100,000,000 in some years.

The report urges measures to secure the preservation of the Bob Whites in this country.—New York Times.

Many people mistake longing to be rich and great for evidence of soul-hunger.



DISCOLORATION OF SEA SEEMS A NEW ISLE.