

HANDBOOKS PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE.—Nos. 141 and 142

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MALPELO, COCOS,
AND
EASTER ISLANDS

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY H. M. STATIONERY OFFICE.

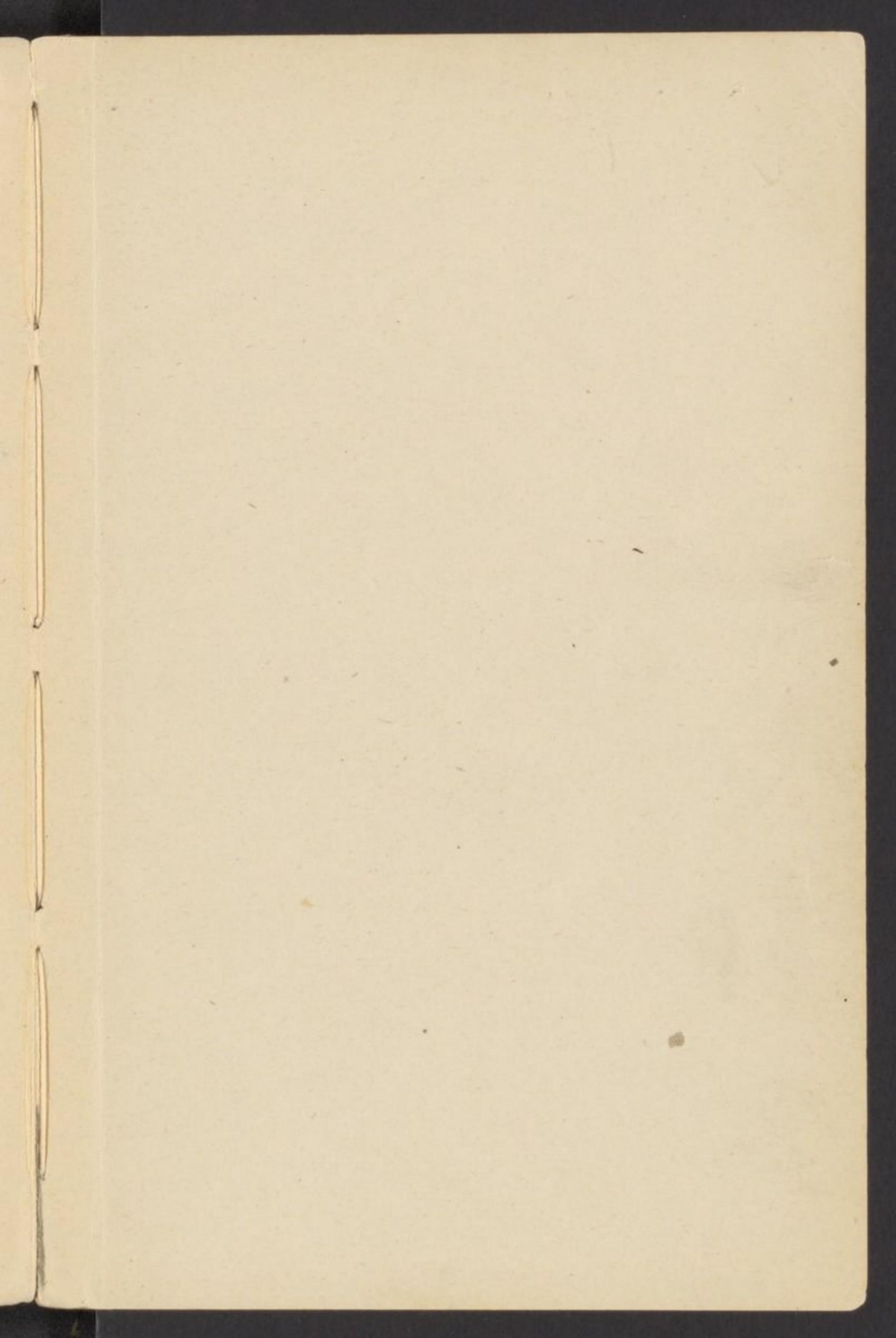
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EDITORIAL NOTE

IN the spring of 1917 the Foreign Office, in connexion with the preparation which they were making for the work of the Peace Conference, established a special section whose duty it should be to provide the British Delegates to the Peace Conference with information in the most convenient form—geographical, economic, historical, social, religious, and political—respecting the different countries, districts, islands, &c., with which they might have to deal. In addition, volumes were prepared on certain general subjects, mostly of an historical nature, concerning which it appeared that a special study would be useful.

The historical information was compiled by trained writers on historical subjects, who (in most cases) gave their services without any remuneration. For the geographical sections valuable assistance was given by the Intelligence Division (Naval Staff) of the Admiralty; and for the economic sections, by the War Trade Intelligence Department, which had been established by the Foreign Office. Of the maps accompanying the series, some were prepared by the above-mentioned department of the Admiralty, but the bulk of them were the work of the Geographical Section of the General Staff (Military Intelligence Division) of the War Office.

Now that the Conference has nearly completed its task, the Foreign Office, in response to numerous inquiries and requests, has decided to issue the books for public use, believing that they will be useful to students of history, politics, economics, and foreign affairs, to publicists generally and to business men and travellers. It is hardly necessary to say that some of the subjects dealt with in the series have not in fact come under discussion at the Peace Conference; but, as the books treating of them contain valuable information, it has been thought advisable to include them.

It must be understood that, although the series of volumes was prepared under the authority, and is now issued with the sanction, of the Foreign Office, that Office is not to be regarded as guaranteeing the accuracy of every statement which they contain or as identifying itself with all the opinions expressed in the several volumes ; the books were not prepared in the Foreign Office itself, but are in the nature of information provided for the Foreign Office and the British Delegation.

The books are now published, with a few exceptions, substantially as they were issued for the use of the Delegates. No attempt has been made to bring them up to date, for, in the first place, such a process would have entailed a great loss of time and a prohibitive expense ; and, in the second, the political and other conditions of a great part of Europe and of the Nearer and Middle East are still unsettled and in such a state of flux that any attempt to describe them would have been incorrect or misleading. The books are therefore to be taken as describing, in general, *ante-bellum* conditions, though in a few cases, where it seemed specially desirable, the account has been brought down to a later date.

G. W. PROTHERO,

*General Editor and formerly
Director of the Historical Section.*

January 1920.

MALPELO ISLAND

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STANDARD GRADE

STANDARD GRADE

I. GEOGRAPHY

(1) POSITION

MALPELO is an islet of bare rock situated some 270 miles south-west of the Gulf of Panama, in latitude $3^{\circ} 59'$ north and longitude $81^{\circ} 34'$ west.

(2) SURFACE AND COAST

The island is about one geographical mile in length from north-east to south-west, and 700 yards in width. Five small rocks or *farallones* lie a few hundred yards distant from its south-west end, three others off its north-east extremity, and two more towards the south-east.¹ All are surrounded by deep water, and the face of the main island is for the most part extremely steep. Soundings of between 1,000 and 1,500 fathoms are obtainable within a few miles of the shore, and there are strong and changeable currents.

From the sea-level the rocks of Malpelo rise sheer out of the water, and the crowning summit attains a height of 846 ft.² Landing is all but impracticable.

(3) CLIMATE

From its geographical position and what is generally known of the neighbouring seas and coastal region, it may be assumed that the atmosphere around the rock is hot and humid, and the winds variable.

(4) POPULATION

There are no inhabitants.

¹ Admiralty Plan, No. 1936.

² *The South America Pilot*, Part III, 469.

II. HISTORY

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

1530. Malpelo said to be recorded in a map of this date.
 1542. President Vaca de Castro's visit.
 1550. Malpelo recorded in P. Desceliers' map.
 1790. Spanish landing on Malpelo mentioned to Malaspina.
 1793. Colnett's visit.
 1837. Note in *Nautical Magazine* recording visit.
 1891. Visit of Agassiz.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

BEING uninhabited, Malpelo has no political history. It is, however, not devoid of interest, for there is good reason to believe that of all the Pacific Islands situated near, but out of sight of, the American continent this was the first one ever discovered by seamen sailing from its ports. Malpelo is stated to be shown upon a map of what was then known of Peru, published by command of the Emperor Charles V, in 1530.¹ The chronicler, Pedro de Cieza de León, who was a participator in many of the events he has recorded, wrote that the ship in which the President Vaca de Castro travelled from Panama to Buenaventura in 1542, 'came to a rocky islet called by the sailors Mal Pelo'—as if they were previously well acquainted with it.² On a very large and beautifully executed parchment map of the world as then known, 'Faicte a Arques par Pierres Desceliers Pbre, lan 1550', the island appears in its true position, but is called 'y^e mallabry';³ and it is found (marked, by a slip of the cartographer's pen, as 'Mapelo') both on Gerard

¹ Lièvre, D., in the *Revue de Géographie*, xxxii. 350.

² *Guerra de Chupas*, chap. 26.

³ 'Malabrigo' (shelterless) was a name bestowed by Spanish discoverers on several islands and bays in early times. Desceliers' map is preserved in the British Museum.

Mercator's map of 1569 and Ortelius' '*Americae, sive novi Orbis, nova descriptio*', dated the following year. Later on, its presence on the maps became intermittent, even to the present day; and it does not figure in Vergara y Velasquez's Colombian Atlas revised by Codazzi to 1891, nor (where it should be) on the British Admiralty chart, No. 3318, published in 1903, though a separate inset is given of it on Plan No. 1936.

Antonio de Herrera mentions Malpelo as 'a small islet where there are fine *cinaloes*'¹ (the meaning of which word is obscure) and says no more about it; but he seems to associate it with the group of the Ladrone Islands much farther west.

Antonio de Alcedo includes it in his *Diccionario Geográfico-Histórico* of 1787, and describes it very briefly like the rest; he places it 'eighty leagues from the Gulf of Panama'. The Spanish commodore, Malaspina, who commanded the sloops *Descubierta* and *Atrevida* on a 'politico-scientific' voyage between 1789 and 1794, is the only explorer whose records² mention a landing on Malpelo. One of his officers³ reported that he had been informed that

'one of the shipmasters in the local trade, favoured by fine weather and a smooth sea, once landed on a shelf of rock on the north face of the island, and after clambering up thirty steps hewn out by hand, came upon a large pool of rain-water, which was not over clean and had some birds' feathers in it; but being much put to for fresh water he used the opportunity to fill some casks. This', adds the officer, significantly, 'is all that can be said about Malpelo.'

His note was written in 1790, and the concluding remark is applicable still. The same passage forms the only reference to Malpelo quoted in Don Antonio Cuervo's collection of previously unpublished archives relating to Colombian history and geography.⁴

From the time of its discovery Malpelo was considered a part of the King of Spain's dominions by divine

¹ *Descripción de las Indias occidentales*, ii. 60.

² *Viaje político-científico alrededor del Mundo*, p. 551.

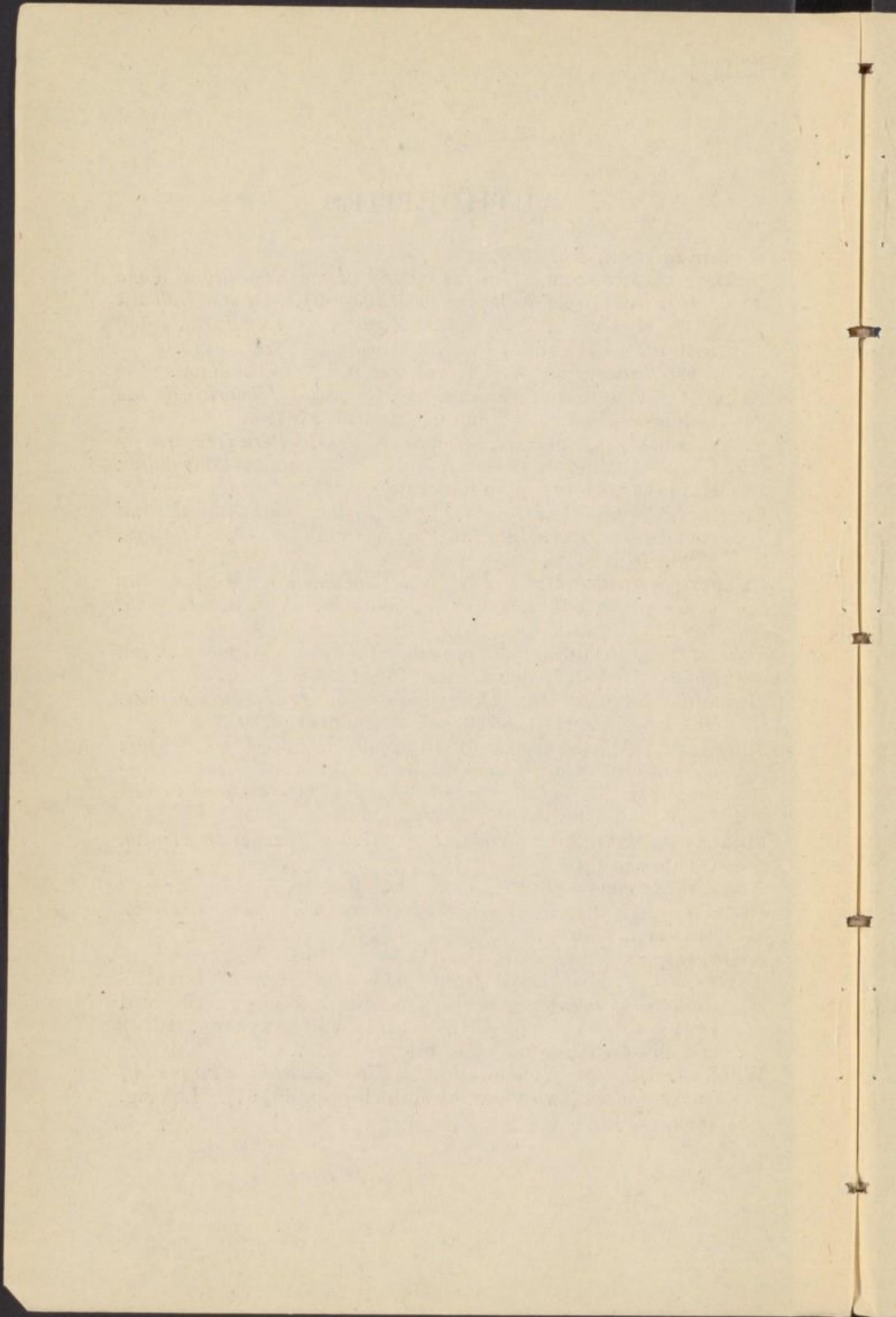
³ Don Fabio Ali Ponzoni: then a sub-lieutenant.

⁴ Cuervo, A., *Colección de documentos*, &c.

right and in virtue of the Alexandrine Bull of 1493, as modified by the Treaty of Tordesillas, which was ratified by the Popes Julius II in 1506 and Leo X in 1514. The principle of sovereignty on the basis of that treaty over all westward islands or continents discovered or to be discovered in the Pacific Ocean—as far even as the Solomon archipelago—was repeatedly affirmed by Viceroys of Peru. Since the period of national independence succeeded to the colonial period of Spanish ascendancy in South America, Malpelo has passed automatically from the mother country to the Republic, firstly of Peru, and now of Colombia. It does not appear that its inclusion in Colombian territory has ever been disputed, and it is shown on modern atlases as an appurtenance of that state.

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COCOS ISLAND

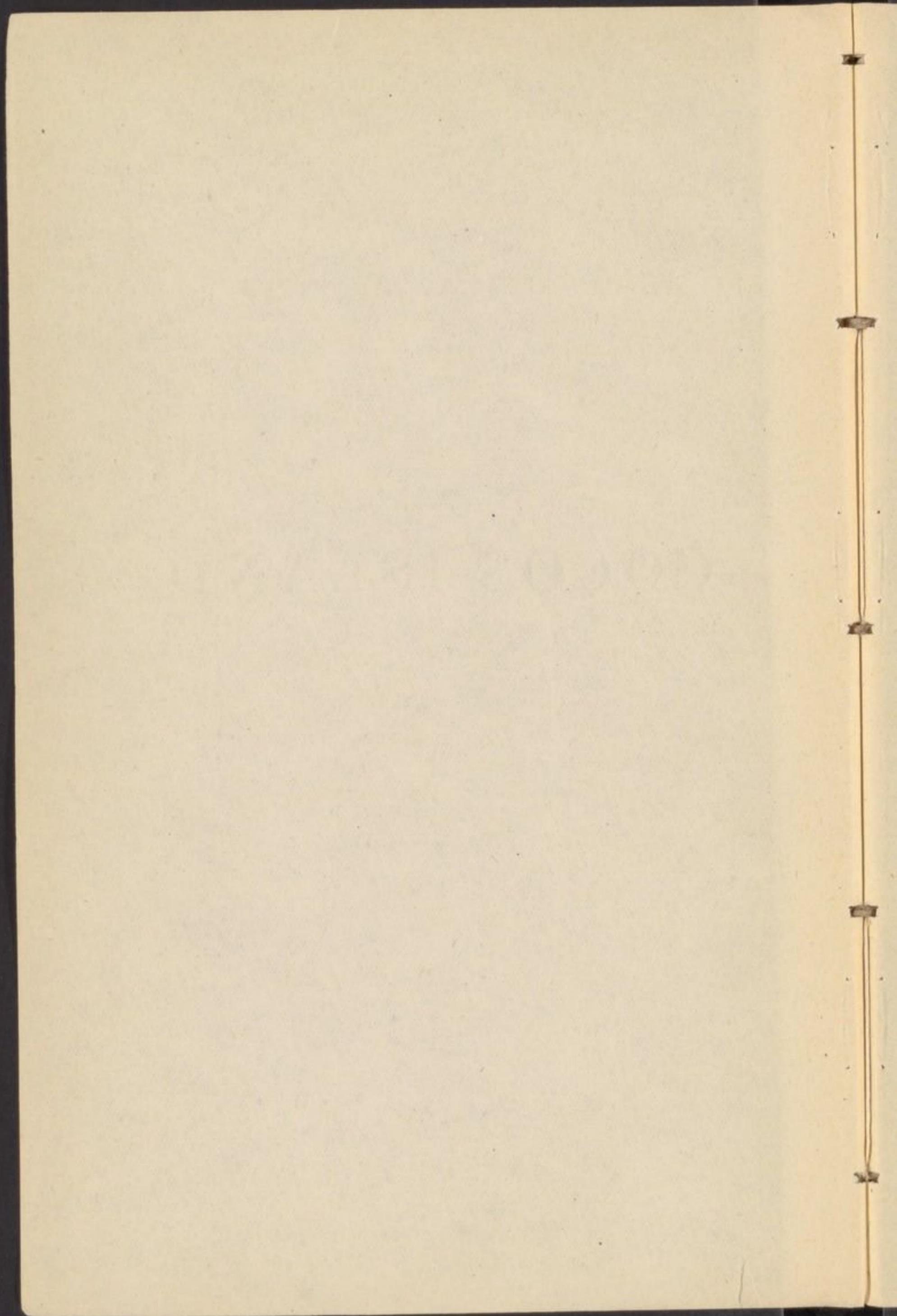


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I. GEOGRAPHY PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL

(1) POSITION AND EXTENT

COCOS ISLAND lies in the eastern Pacific Ocean in latitude $5^{\circ} 35'$ north and longitude $87^{\circ} 2'$ west (Chatham Bay). The nearest point on the mainland of Central America is Cape Salsipuedes in the Republic of Costa Rica. Its distance from Panama is about 540 miles.

The island is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and 14 miles in circumference. Its area, including that of a few islets off its coast, is 18 square miles.

(2) SURFACE AND COAST

Surface

The island is mountainous and entirely volcanic, rising to several peaks, of which the highest reaches 2,788 ft. These peaks are probably volcanoes, but the interior is unexplored and almost impenetrable, owing to its steep, rugged, and often precipitous nature, the many rushing streams, and the dense vegetation. There are small areas of comparatively level ground surrounding Chatham and Wafer Bays.

There are many considerable streams, the largest being that which enters Wafer Bay, which is reported to flow from a lake in the interior. Another notable stream enters Chatham Bay, and there is a third on the south coast which has a fall of about 1,000 ft. into a bay behind Meule Islet.

The streams flow with undiminished volume through-

out the year, and could be made to serve as sources of water-power.

Soil of great fertility occurs everywhere on the island.

Coast

Nearly everywhere steep cliffs make landing impossible, the only three exceptions being Chatham Bay and Wafer Bay in the north and an unnamed bay in the south. Landing is difficult on the whole of the south coast, because of the incessant heavy surf.

The only two harbours are those of Chatham and Wafer Bays, of which Chatham Bay is the better, being sheltered except from the north and north-east. Wafer Bay is larger than Chatham Bay, but is less sheltered, as it opens to the west, and so has a heavy swell during the early months of the year. On the other hand, the slopes surrounding the bay are less abrupt and the area of level land in its neighbourhood is more considerable.

(3) CLIMATE

There are no accurate data concerning the climate of Cocos Island. In general terms it is warm and very humid throughout the year, but the temperatures do not seem to be as high as the latitude would suggest. The island is so small that its temperatures are influenced considerably by the currents that wash its shores.

The winds are light and generally from the south and south-west. Calms are frequent and often accompanied by heavy rainfall. There is no dry season.

(4) SANITARY CONDITIONS

The climate appears to be healthy, and there are no endemic diseases, but in course of time the damp hot atmosphere would prove enervating. No mosquitoes have so far been reported; but were the island

inhabited and in frequent relation with the mainland, they would probably be imported, and would certainly thrive.

(5) POPULATION

Cocos Island has never had any permanent population. It was a resort of the buccaneers in the seventeenth century, and later was a watering-place for whalers. About 1897 there was an attempt to colonize the island, but it does not appear to be inhabited now.

(6) PRODUCTS

Luxuriant tropical forest covers practically the whole island. There are many kinds of hard timber trees, such as are found in Central America, and two species of palms. The coco-nut palm, the prevalence of which gave the island its name, is now rare and scarcely found, except in the interior, but it certainly could be replanted. There are many tree-ferns. Besides timber trees there are a few plants of economic value, such as the guava, papaw, lemon, and pumpkin. Most of these have probably been introduced by settlers at one time or another.

Except for the difficulty of finding level land and keeping down the forest growth, most tropical crops might be cultivated. Certainly a considerable amount of fruit could be grown.

There is little animal life. Wild pigs, descendants of those left by Colnett in 1793, thrive, and rats, also introduced, are numerous. There is one species of snake and a lizard. In the coastal waters there are turtle. Sea-birds are numerous, and there are a few land species, including ducks. In the surrounding seas there are plenty of good edible fish.

II. POLITICAL HISTORY

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- 1541-50. First appearance on maps.
- 1681-7. Visited by buccaneers, and described by Lionel Wafer. Missed, but described, from eye-witnesses' reports, by William Dampier. Often unsuccessfully searched for.
1720. Visit of Clipperton and William Betagh.
1741. Sighted, but not visited, by Commodore Anson.
1791. Sighted and located by Bustamente.
1793. Visited and described by Capt. Colnett.
1795. Visited and described by Capt. Vancouver.
- 1800-50. Becomes a favourite resort of whalers.
- c. 1818-26. Three deposits of plundered treasure concealed.
1838. Visited, and partly surveyed, by Sir Edward Belcher.
1847. Visited by the French ship of war *La Génie*.
- 1873 onwards. Various unsuccessful attempts to find the concealed treasure.
1888. Gieseler nominated Governor.
1892. Von Bremer's expedition in search of the treasure.
1894. The *Aurora* expedition.
1895. Surveyed and reported on by Capt. R. McC. Passmore for the Costa Rican Government.
1897. H.M. Ships *Impérieuse* and (later) *Amphion* called.
1902. The *Blakeley* search expedition.
1903. The *Lytton* search expedition ; Gieseler quits the island.
- 1906-7. Lord FitzWilliam's search expedition.
- 1911-13. Further expeditions for the recovery of the treasure.

A. GENERAL HISTORY

(1) *First Visits to the Island. Early Maps*

THE Isle of Cocos, like the Galápagos group and the rock called Malpelo, was one of the landfalls made at a very early period in the history of Spanish adventure on the Pacific side of America; but the particulars of its discovery, and the identity of the discoverer, are lost to present knowledge. Its existence and approximate situation must have become known, even in Europe, soon after the foundation of Panama and the exploration of Nicaragua, as the island figures on some of the early French maps, where, though the name it still retains is clearly of Spanish origin, it is translated into 'Ye de Coques'. One of these maps (that of Nicolas Desliens) is dated 1541; another (known later as Henri II's Mappemonde) was executed in 1542, and a third (now in the British Museum¹) was drawn at Arques near Dieppe by Pierre Desceliers, in 1550.

Before the close of the sixteenth century the island seems to have been met with by some other Spanish shipmaster, who perhaps had never heard of it before, or else miscalculated his position; for he bestowed the name *Isla de la Santa Cruz* upon the land he saw, believing it to be a new discovery. Reports of this also reached Europe, and two separate islands are shown on Cornelius Wytfliet's engraved map of *Ivcatana regio et fondura*,² published in 1605.³ One of these is marked 'Ys de Cocos', and the other to the eastward, where no land exists, appears as 'Ys S. Cruz'. In Hondius, map of the following year 'S. Cruz' appears alone, and the same lead was followed by Gerard Mercator in his Atlas Minor of 1607. After this the newer name

¹ Add. MSS. 24065.

² Yucatan and Honduras.

³ C. Wytfliet, *Histoire*; ff. 104-5.

fell into disuse; and the merely descriptive appellation 'Isla de Cocos' has clung to the island in spite of the fact that its groves of palms, through ruthless felling for the sake of the nuts by buccaneers and the crews of whaling vessels, have almost disappeared.

In the seventeenth century and later Cocos Island came to be a favourite resort of privateers and filibusters. Its isolated yet accessible situation, the facility with which fresh water of most excellent purity could be shipped, the ease with which sea-fowl could be taken, the abundance of coco-nuts, and the absence of human inhabitants, sufficiently account for its popularity.

Accounts of the visits of sea-rovers have been published, by Wafer,¹ Betagh,² and Dampier³ in particular; several other commanders have recorded unavailing efforts to find the island, with the same object in view, of whom Olivier van Noort⁴ in 1600, Joris van Speilberghen⁵ in 1615, William Ambrose Cowley⁶ in 1684, Raveneau de Lussan⁷ in 1687, may be mentioned.

(2) *First Residents*

The first reliable record of any persons having lived on Cocos Island is that by Betagh. He served in Captain Clipperton's ship, the *Success*; and, when that vessel called there to refresh her crew in 1720, the invalids remained ashore a whole month. Betagh states that 'the food, ease, and refreshment pretty well recover'd all our company'; so much so, indeed, that three of the white men and eight negroes were, by their own wish, left behind on the island.

¹ L. Wafer, pp. 379-80.

² W. Betagh, pp. 146-7.

³ W. Dampier, p. 111.

⁴ O. van Noort, pp. 31-2.

⁵ Hakluyt Society, Series II, vol. xviii, pp. 102-3.

⁶ British Museum, Sloane MS. 54.

⁷ A. O. Exquemelin, vol. iii, by Lussan, p. 259.

(3) *Anson, Bustamente, Colnett, and Vancouver*

In Christmas week, 1741, H.M. ships *Centurion* and *Gloucester* were detained by light and baffling winds and dull weather for five days in sight of Cocos Island.¹ No attempt was made to land a party on this occasion. Pascoe Thomas, one of the historians of Anson's voyage, remarks of Cocos Island that

'it is reported to be very fruitful and pleasant, and to produce Limes, Cacao Nuts, and the like in abundance; as also to abound in Hogs, and good Water, as well as to have convenient Landing'.²

Just fifty years after this the Spanish commander Don José de Bustamente, of the sloop *Atrevida*, was detached by Commodore Malaspina to determine the true position of Cocos Island, and first sighted it when he believed himself to be sixty miles away. He cruised off the island for some days, but does not appear to have attempted a landing.³

With the decline of buccaneering and contraband trading on the Spanish American coasts, the South Sea whaling and sealing enterprise began to develop; and it was in the interests of certain whaling firms that Captain James Colnett visited Cocos Island in the ship *Rattler* in 1793. His mission was to prospect and report upon the best methods for extending the whaling industry, and the Board of Admiralty (who lent valuable assistance) recommended that he should not pursue his researches in the Pacific Ocean farther northward than Cocos Island.⁴

¹ R. Walter, pp. 224-5.

² P. Thomas, p. 103.

³ Malaspina, pp. 120-1.

⁴ Owing to the exclusion by the Spanish Government of foreign vessels from its ports in America, a memorial was presented to the Board of Trade by London merchants concerned in the South Sea fisheries, representing the importance of discovering such harbours

Captain Colnett's description of the island is full and picturesque. He was much impressed by its natural fertility and charm. He characterizes it as

'Otaheite on a small scale, but without the advantage of its climate, or the hospitality of its natives'.

Unlike other navigators, Colnett considered Wafer Bay a better anchorage than North or Chatham Bay, though only for ships of less than 200 tons. He left a pair of goats ashore, as well as a boar and a sow, which afterwards multiplied; he also planted fruit and vegetable seeds.¹

Colnett's exploration was followed by Captain George Vancouver's, while commanding H.M. ships *Discovery* and *Chatham*, in 1795. This officer was less favourably impressed with the island than Colnett had been.² To arrive at a true estimate of its natural resources (so far as its coast and anchorages are concerned) the accounts of both these writers should be read. But neither of them explored the interior, which is very broken and rugged and everywhere covered with dense forest or bush. Vancouver examined both roadsteads, and the *Discovery's* master, Mr. Whidbey, gave preference to Chatham Bay.³

as might provide South Sea whalers voyaging round Cape Horn with opportunities of refreshment and security for refitting. This memorial set forth the liability of the crews of these ships to scurvy and other misfortunes, and emphasized the need for intermediate ports of call. In response to this memorial the sloop *Rattler* was purchased from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty by Messrs. Enderby & Sons, the leading firm of those engaged in the whaling and sealing trade. Capt. Colnett, R.N., was placed in command, with particular instructions for conducting the desired investigation. Cf. Colnett, pp. viii, ix.

¹ Colnett, J., pp. 66-74.

² Colnett and Vancouver had been shipmates under Captain Cook in H.M.S. *Resolution*, during 1772-75, the first as a midshipman and the other as an able seaman.

³ Vancouver, G., vol. iii, pp. 362-76.

Ships of the British and North American whale fishery now began to make Cocos Island a place of call; and sundry stray references indicate that from the close of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century (i. e. so long as whaling in those seas was a profitable enterprise) their visits were fairly frequent and their crews found in the island the relief they wanted.

(4) *Deposits of Treasure*

Except for this patronage by whalers, the island seems to have lapsed, after the visits of Colnett and Vancouver, into one of its recurrent periods of oblivion. Advantage was taken of this, in 1818 or 1819, by a notorious pirate known as Benito, *alias* Bennett Graham, to secrete there a vast plunder he had obtained by rifling certain churches in Peru. A few years afterwards, it is said, Benito deposited a fresh quantity of gold bars and specie, worth eleven million dollars. In or about 1826 a man passing as William Thompson, who appears to have previously served under Benito, but was then in command of the brig *Mary Read*, concealed about twelve million dollars' worth of stolen gold coin, jewels, and silver ingots on Cocos Island.

Some of the circumstances of the three lodgements of treasure at the island, and of efforts that have been made for its recovery, are related (by persons who were more or less concerned in the matter) in documents preserved at the Admiralty. An attempt to piece the facts together in the form of a narrative is embodied in a book called *On the Track of a Treasure*, by Mr. Hervey de Montmorency.¹ Another book, by Mr. Ralph D. Paine,² contains a chapter on the subject under the

¹ Montmorency, H. de, *passim*.

² Paine, R. D., *The Book of Buried Treasure*, p. 279, &c.

heading 'The Lure of Cocos Island', much of which is culled from the former book. Both these books are of the sketchy or 'popular' order, and the narratives they present cannot be accepted without reserve, nor can they be regarded as complete, because many of the true details of the story have never transpired. Certain names of persons, and of at least one ship, have also been transfigured; but any one with a knowledge of the facts will find little difficulty in recognizing the pseudonyms adopted.

(5) *Attempts to recover Treasure*

Not less than a dozen organized attempts to recover the buried treasure have been made. Clues to the spot where one batch of treasure was deposited have led some of the searchers to a marked rock; and one man is said to have come upon some gold bars and kegs of Spanish coin through an accidental fall over the face of a scarp. A silver ecclesiastical cross was also found in the bed of a stream. But the main stores of treasure are still hidden, in spite of various excavations and blasting operations which have been undertaken from time to time.

In 1841 the brig *Edgcombe* proceeded to Cocos Island, from Newfoundland, with certain mariners named Boig, Keating, and Gault, whose design was to recover the treasure. Two deserters from an American whaler were living there then—perhaps of the same party which Belcher found.¹ A further visit in search of the treasure was paid to the island a year or two later by the schooner *Gauntlet*, of Newfoundland. There is a record in the Foreign Office to the effect that

¹ *Infra*, p. 22.

' A treasure search expedition was organized by a syndicate formed by Lord FitzWilliam, under a concession held by Mr. Gissler (or Gieseler), who lived on the island for many years. At the same time the Costa Rican Government granted a similar concession to a Mr. T. Robinson. The Costa Rican Government professed at first to regard Lord FitzWilliam's expedition as a filibustering one ; but ultimately the FitzWilliam and Robinson parties came to an agreement and joined forces in an attempt to discover the treasure, which was not successful '.

Another search expedition was carried out in 1912 by Miss L. Brocklesby Davis and Mrs. Barre Tile (or Till ?), under a two years' concession granted by the Costa Rican Government. The ultimate object of this undertaking was to devote the proceeds to philanthropic work in London ; but the ladies met with no success. Some further, but not very clear, account of this and other expeditions for the recovery of this treasure were published in the issues of *The Times* quoted below.¹

(6) *Visit of Belcher*

The results obtained by previous explorers were revised by Captain Sir Edward Belcher, commanding H.M.S. *Sulphur*, with the *Starling* in company, in 1838 ; it is mainly from the survey made by officers of those ships that the northern and western coast-line, including Chatham and Wafer Bays, has been laid down on the modern Admiralty chart of Cocos Island.² Belcher refutes Vancouver's depreciatory remarks, which, he tells us, he read ' not without surprise'. ' The thicket', he says, ' is not now impenetrable,' for the men belonging to a whale-ship that was then at anchor passed across the ridge (which is 700 feet high) from Chatham

¹ *The Times* South American Supplement of June 27, 1911, pp. 8-9 ; *Ibid.*, May 27, 1913, p. 8 ; *The Times*, July 13, 1912, p. 8.

² Plan No. 1936.

Bay to Wafer Bay; and some of the bluejackets reported that they had reached a lake, or large sheet of water, in the interior. Pigs and goats were then plentiful. The whaler's men managed to catch plenty of fish. Several seamen were living on the island at the time of the *Sulphur's* visit, and they had built a hut. One was an Englishman, another a Portuguese, and five were coloured men. They had been landed from a whaler by their own demand, and subsisted on fish, wild pigs, sea-fowl, &c. Only one of them was then induced to come away; but when the *Sulphur* revisited the place a year later three of the others had gone off in another whaler, and two of the latter's crew, being corrupted by those remaining, had deserted and taken their places on shore. A whale-ship was then at anchor, and her men had gathered fifty pumpkins from the vines planted by the *Sulphur's* people twelve months before.¹

(7) *Visits of French Men-of-War*

In 1847 the French frigate *La Génie* called, and added her record to Colnett's and Vancouver's, cut on a boulder at Chatham Bay. In 1889 the French cruiser *Duquesne*, and in 1891 the *Dubourdieu*, touched at Cocos Island. It was probably as an officer of this last ship that M. Lièvre² visited the island. His description of it is one of the best.

(8) *Visit of Agassiz*

The late Alexander Agassiz called at Cocos Island in the U.S. Fish Commission steamer *Albatross* in March 1891, during one of his many cruises undertaken

¹ Belcher, E., vol. i, p. 189.

² Lièvre, p. 357.

purely for scientific research. An outline of his observations is published in the *Bulletin of the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology*, vol. xxiii; ¹ but it contributes nothing to the history of the place.

B. OWNERSHIP

With regard to the nationality of Cocos Island no clear statement has been met with dating earlier than 1888, in which year, according to Mr. de Montmorency, the German (or, according to *The Times* supplement,² Swiss) settler Gieseler, or Geisler, was granted a concession in the island by the Costa Rican Government, with a nomination as governor—a post which had never previously been created there, as the island was uninhabited. Gieseler, who with his wife and one native labourer from the continent then formed the entire population of the island, finally quitted it in the steamer *Lytton* (late *Scotia*) with the Montmorency expedition in 1903; and in 1911 he was living at Punta Arenas (Costa Rica).³

It was Gieseler's homestead that was seen in 1897 in Wafer Bay, and reported by the officer commanding H.M.S. *Icarus*,⁴ Comdr. E. J. Fleet, as 'a small settlement of four or five huts, where the Costa Rica colours were flying'.

An examination of Don Manuel M. de Peralta's *Aperçu critique*,⁵ submitted to the President of the French Republic as arbitrator on the boundary question between Costa Rica and Colombia in 1900, reveals no mention whatever of Cocos Island, nor of any Costa Rican territorial claim to seaward of Coiba Island.

¹ Agassiz, A., pp. 1-85.

² See note 1, col. 7.

³ *The Times* South American Supplement, 1911.

⁴ His report was transmitted through the naval Commander-in-Chief on the station, whose flagship was H.M.S. *Impérieuse*.

⁵ Peralta, *passim*.

In the excellent descriptive account (which includes some historical notice of the island) by Assistant Paymaster D. Lièvre, of the French navy, this officer ignores the existence of any sovereign rights over it and discusses the possible advantages France might derive by taking possession of it. M. Lièvre's articles were published in 1893.¹ Incidentally, he mentions that Clipperton Island,² the nearest land to Cocos Island, on the west-north-west, did at that time belong to France. There appear to have been guano, or phosphate, workings on it in 1894, in the hands of the Oceanic Phosphate Lime Co., of San Francisco; but in 1896-7 the proprietors, owing to inadequate capital and working difficulties, desired to sell all their interest there, including their title to the island. Their agents stated that the French Government had waived its claim to the island, and negotiations for taking it over were pending with the Pacific Islands Co., Ltd., a wealthy and well-known phosphate-getting concern, mainly British, but in which the German Emperor was a large private shareholder. There are no phosphatic deposits on Cocos Island, whose physical features are radically different from those of Clipperton Island.

It was stated by the late Colonel Church, in an article contributed by him to the *Geographical Journal* in 1897,³ that 'Cocos Island is a possession of Costa Rica', and that 'Captain R. McC. Passmore, an English ex-naval officer in the employ of Costa Rica, had been engaged in surveying Cocos Island in 1895, and reported upon his work to the Government of that Republic'.

Colonel Church was a distinguished and trustworthy traveller and engineer who was long in Costa Rica and

¹ *Revue de Géographie*, xxxii, xxxiii, 1893.

² In lat. 10° 17' N., long. 109° 13' W. of Greenwich.

³ *Geographical Journal*, July 1897. Vol. x, p. 73.

Bolivia.¹ He mentions, in the same article, apparently on Captain Passmore's authority, that there were 'ten colonists (at Cocos Island) in 1894, part of the emigrants sent there under a contract with the Costa Rica Government to establish an agricultural colony. It was, however, suspected that the real object of the *empresario* was to hunt for immense treasures in gold bars said to have been buried in three separate parcels in as many localities by the pirate Benito ; or, according to another story, by the captain of an English brig, to whom the treasure was entrusted in Peru during the War of Independence.'²

The existence of treasure concealed in the island is well established, and has been a matter of notoriety among residents not only of Costa Rica but of all the principal coast towns from Lima to Vancouver for many years. The principal interest hitherto aroused regarding Cocos Island centres in this fact.

¹ For a biographical notice of Colonel Church see the *Geographical Journal*, vol. xxxv, of 1910, pp. 203, 206.

² *Loc. cit.* The captain of the brig was the 'William Thompson' mentioned in § 4. Cf. Montmorency, H. de, *On the Track of a Treasure.*

III. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

IN so far as its known history points, the administration of Cocos Island by the Government of Costa Rica dates from 1888 (cf. above, p. 23). Prior to the year 1821 the State of Costa Rica was a Spanish possession from the beginning of the sixteenth century. At that time, and for 300 years afterwards, the Spanish monarchs and people believed in the temporal efficacy of the Papal Bull of Alexander VI, as amended by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, and claimed sovereign rights over all the islands to the westward of the American continent, as far as a meridian passing through the East Indies. It was on this basis that Viceroy of Peru despatched expeditions of discovery into the Pacific Ocean, of which Mendaña's to the Solomon Islands, Queiros's in search of a southern continent, Gonzalez's to Easter Island, and Boenechea's to Tahiti (places much more remote from the continent than Cocos Island is) afford examples. Hence, when in 1821 Costa Rica declared itself independent of the mother country, its rulers would, in the ordinary course, view Cocos Island, which is only 260 miles distant, as an appurtenance, if not an integral part, of the *terrain* of the new republic. Geographically considered, such a claim must be conceded; and there is little doubt that popular opinion and national sentiment in Costa Rica would oppose any suggestion to the contrary. Moreover, some thirty years have passed, without challenge, since the Ministry appointed Gieseler their governor in the island; and it is a principle of international law that *Qui prior est tempore potior est jure*. In other words, Costa Rica is daily acquiring a prescriptive ownership by priority of occupation.

APPENDIX

WRITING of 1684, William Dampier, who was then serving in the *Batchelor's Delight*, under Capt. John Cook, describes from hearsay Cocos Island (which they failed to find) as

'so named by the Spaniards, because there are abundance of Coco-nut Trees growing on it. They are not only in one or two Places, but grow in great Groves, all round the Island, by the Sea. This is an uninhabited Island, it is 7 or 8 Leagues round, and pretty high in the middle, where it is destitute of Trees, but looks very green and pleasant, with an herb called by the Spaniards *gramadael*.¹ It is low Land by the Sea-side. This Island is in 5d. 15m. North of the Equator; it is environed with Rocks, which makes it almost inaccessible: only at the N.E. End there is a small Harbour where Ships may safely enter and ride secure. In this Harbour there is a fine Brook of fresh Water running into the Sea. This is the Account that the Spaniards give of it, and I had the same also from Capt. Eaton, who was there afterward.' (*A New Voyage round the World*. By Capt. William Dampier (p. 111). London, 1729.)

Lionel Wafer, who was in the same ship and visited Cocos Island in 1685, gives a better account, from his own observation, viz.:

'We . . . came to the Island Cocos, in 5 Deg. 15 Min. N. Lat. 'Tis so called from its Coco-Nuts, wherewith 'tis plentifully stor'd. 'Tis but a small Island, yet a very pleasant one: For the Middle of the Island is a steep Hill, surrounded all about with a Plain, declining to the Sea. This Plain, and particularly the Valley where you go ashore, is thick set with Coco-Nut Trees, which flourish here very finely, it being a rich and fruitful Soil. They also grow on the skirts of the hilly ground in the Middle of the Isle, and scattering in Spots upon the Sides of it, very pleasantly. But that which contributes most to the Pleasure of the Place is, that a great many Springs of clear and sweet Water rising to the Top of the Hill, are there gathered as in a deep large Bason or Pond, the Top subsiding inwards quite round; and the Water having by this means no Channel whereby to flow along, as in a Brook or River, it overflows the Verge of its Bason in several Places, and runs trickling down in many

¹ Couch grass (*Triticum repens*).

pretty streams. In some Places of its overflowing, the rocky Sides of the Hill being more than perpendicular, and hanging over the Plain beneath, the Water pours down in a Cataract, as out of a bucket, so as to leave a Space dry under the Spout, and form a kind of Arch of Water ; which together with the Advantage of the Prospect, the near adjoining Coco-nut Trees, and the Freshness which the falling Water gives the Air in this hot Climate, makes it a very charming Place, and delightful to several of the Senses at once.

‘Our men were very much pleas’d with the Entertainment this Island afforded them : And they also fill’d here all their Water-Casks ; for here is excellent fresh Water in the Rivulet which those little Cataracts form below in the Plain, and the Ship lay just at its Outlet into the Sea, where there was very good Riding. So that ’tis as commodious a Watering-place as any I have met with. Nor did we spare the Coco-nuts, eating what we would and drinking the Milk, and carrying several Hundreds of them on board.’ (See pp. 379–80, in vol. iii of *A Collection of Voyages*, published by James and John Knapton ; London, 1729.)

William Betagh quotes from the journal of George Taylor, mate of Capt. Clipperton’s ship the *Success*, 18 Dec. 1720.

‘Here all our people . . . got ashore, where we build a house for the sick men. Here is abundance of good fish round the island which we take pains to catch, the surf being sometimes very great. Our people find here plenty of coco-nuts, crabs, boobies and their eggs, this being their hatching time. . . . This food, ease, and refreshment pretty well recover’d all our company. We wood and water though with much difficulty ; for here is a great swell coming in from the northward constantly at full moon and change. . . . Eight *nigros* and three of our men desert here, and abscond in the woods : Higgins, Caulker, and Shingle. . . . After continuing here a month we weigh and set sail, January 20th, latitude 05 : 38 N.’ (*A Voyage round the World*. By William Betagh (pp. 146–7). London, 1728.)

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EASTER ISLAND

CHAPTER I

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I. GEOGRAPHY PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL

(1) POSITION AND AREA

EASTER ISLAND, or Rapa Nui, is situated in the eastern Pacific Ocean, about 2,100 miles west of Coquimbo on the coast of Chile. The position of the settlement at Cook Bay on the west coast is $27^{\circ} 10'$ south latitude and $109^{\circ} 26'$ west longitude. It is a Chilean possession. The nearest island is the barren rock of Sala y Gomez, about east by north, 210 miles distant. Easter Island lies 2,200 miles from Tahiti, and about 420 miles south-east of the great circle route from Panama to Wellington, New Zealand.

The circumference of the island is about 29 miles, and its area about 40 square miles.

The British and American charts differ considerably in detail. Of the two the American is the later. The Chilean chart appears to be mainly a copy of the British.

Table of Approximate Distances

Distances from Easter Island :

	<i>Miles.</i>
Western end of Magellan Straits	2,400
Port Stanley Wireless Telegraph Station	3,000
Valparaiso	2,040
Callao	1,920
Panama Canal	2,820
New Zealand	4,000
Honolulu	3,900
Pitcairn Island (nearest British possession)	1,800

(2) SURFACE AND COAST

The island, which is roughly triangular in shape, is an elevated plateau, from the general level of which a number of hills arise, the highest points being at or near the angles. The highest summit is Rana Hana Hana (1,767 ft.) in the north-west corner. In the south-west Rana Kao reaches 1,327 ft., and in the east Puakatiki rises to about 1,000 ft.

The whole island is of volcanic formation, and the peaks are extinct or dormant volcanoes. Several of them have well-formed craters and two or three have crater lakes. There is no historic record of eruption, nor has any earthquake been known.

Disintegrating lava forms the surface everywhere, and in addition to the large volcanoes there are numerous small cones of volcanic ash. In the north-east there is a good deal of drifting sand, which renders walking difficult and riding tedious.

Nearly all the coasts are cliff-bound. At the south-western and eastern angles the cliffs rise to about 1,000 ft. Elsewhere they are lower, varying from 50 to 100 ft. Off the south-west angle are three islets, the largest of which is Motu Nui, and there are smaller rocks near some of the headlands, but otherwise the coasts are reported to be clear.

There are no streams.

(3) CLIMATE

Easter Island lies in the trade wind region, and has a fairly uniform climate throughout the year. The warmest season is from January to March, with a mean temperature of about 74° F. (23° C.), and the coolest season from June to October, with a mean of about 65° F. (18° C.). Temperatures of over 80° F. (27° C.)

and under 50° F. (10° C.) are rare. Bright sunshine is usual.

The trade wind (east to south-east) prevails at all seasons, but northerly winds sometimes occur, chiefly from June to November. Southerly and westerly winds are less common. The trade wind blows strongly in the daytime and slackens towards evening. Gales are infrequent and thunderstorms rare.

Rain falls in all months, chiefly in showers or drizzle; on the higher ground there are probably heavier falls. The total rainfall for the year is variable, but seems to be about 50 in. (1.27 m.), which is barely sufficient to make the island productive. Dew is regular and heavy. Mists often occur in summer.

(4) SANITARY CONDITIONS

The climate is healthy, and the population used to enjoy great freedom from sickness. Latterly, however, tuberculosis has been introduced and become common. Flies are a plague, and mosquitoes breed in the crater lakes, but neither insect seems to bear disease.

The water-supply is poor. Despite the rainfall there is no running water on account of the absorbent nature of the rocks. Near the settlement of Hanga Roa there is a spring of good water, which is said never to fail. There are several other wells which have an intermittent supply. Among the ancient remains for which the island is famous there is evidence of structures erected for the storage of water.

(5) RACE AND POPULATION

The natives, who are Polynesian with some Melanesian admixture, number about 250. This is probably only one-tenth of the total living on the island when it was discovered. The decrease is due to the removal

natives on several occasions and to exotic diseases. In 1863 about 900 were kidnapped by Peruvians for the Chincha Island guano diggings. In 1871 the French missionaries, who found themselves at divergence with the firm of Brander, then in control of the island, left for Mangareva, in the Gambier Islands, with 300 natives. In the same year the firm of Brander employed about 500 on their plantations at Tahiti.

The population is confined to the western side, where the only villages, Hanga Roa and Mataveri, are situated. The only white inhabitant is the manager of the Chilean company which uses the island as a cattle-ranch and employs native labourers.

Most of the natives profess Christianity, but there are now no missionaries on the island. The language is Polynesian.

The problem of the origin of the huge carved images on Easter Island is still unsolved.

II. POLITICAL HISTORY

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

1722. Discovery by the Dutch.
1770. Re-discovery by the Spaniards, and annexation to Spain by order of the Viceroy of Peru.
1774. Visit and exploration by Captain Cook.
1786. Visit and exploration by La Pérouse.
- 1804, 1816. Visits by Lisiansky and Kotzebue (Russians).
1805. Natives kidnapped by American sealers.
1825. H.M.S. *Blossom's* boat's crew stoned by natives.
1830. Visit by H.M.S. *Seringapatam*.
1852. Call by H.M.S. *Portland*.
1862. Visit by French gunboat *Cassini*.
- 1862-63. Slave-raids by Peruvians.
1863. Small-pox introduced by the repatriated slaves.
1864. First missionary (Eugène Eyraud) landed.
1866. Mission reinforced. Dutrou-Bornier, associated in business with Mr. Brander, settles on the island.
1868. Island visited by H.M.S. *Topaze*.
1870. Island visited by French cruiser *Flore*, H.M.S. *Chanticleer*, and the Chilean training-ship *O'Higgins*. Chile reported to have taken possession.
1870. Bornier quarrels with the missionaries.
1871. Mission evacuates Easter Island. Messrs. Bornier and Brander claim the lands throughout the island, and introduce sheep and cattle.
1875. The *O'Higgins* revisits Easter Island.
1876. Bornier killed by natives.
1877. Visit of French cruiser *Seignelay*. Death of Mr. Brander, senior, at Tahiti.
1882. Visits of H.M.S. *Sappho* and German gunboat *Hyäne*.
- 1884 (*circa*). Lands at Hanga Roa acquired by the Chilean Government from the Roman Catholic mission.
1884. Visit of H.M.S. *Constance*.
1888. Visit of Chilean cruiser *Angamos*. Chilean flag hoisted.

1888. Visit of the United States corvette *Mohican*.
1889. French mission hands over property to Archbishop of Santiago.
1895. Lands at Hanga Roa leased by the Chilean Government to the *Compañía Esplotadora de la Isla de Pascua*. Visit of British training squadron under Commodore Atkinson. Rights in the island acquired by Señor Merlet.
1900. Visit by Chilean corvette *Jeneral Baquedano*.
1903. Merlet's rights transferred to *Compañía Esplotadora*.
1904. Visit by U.S. Government steamer *Albatross* with Professor Agassiz's expedition, and also by the *Jeneral Baquedano*.
1906. Visit of H.M. ships *Cambrian* and *Flora*.
1909. Same ships revisit Easter Island.
- 1914-15. Explorations by Mr. and Mrs. Scoresby Routledge. German cruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* put in, and set up a look-out and signal station.
1915. Visit of Chilean training-ship *Jeneral Baquedano*.
- 1917-18. Part of crew of wrecked German armed cruiser *Seeadler* take refuge on the island.

(1) EARLY HISTORY

THIS island, known to its natives as Rapa Nui, was discovered in 1722 by the Hollander Jacob Roggeveen, while conducting a search for the supposed Southern Continent reported by Edward Davis (in 1687) to have been sighted in the same latitude.

It was independently discovered again in 1770 by Don Felipe González, of the Spanish Navy, when engaged in a similar quest; and this officer, acting under instructions from the Viceroy of Peru, formally annexed the island to the Crown of Spain, and erected three crosses on it in token thereof. A Declaration of Possession¹ was drawn up in writing and attested by the Paymaster on November 20, 1770.

¹ The official copy of this document, attached to Capt. González' report, is preserved in the *Archivo de Indias* at Seville (see Appendix, p. 56).

Rapa Nui was next visited by Capt. Cook and his officers, with the Forsters (father and son), in H.M.S. *Resolution*, in 1774. They were followed by de la Pérouse and de Langle in 1786, Amasa Delano (American) in 1802, Capt. Urey Lisiansky (Russian) in 1804, Lieut. Otto von Kotzebue (Russian) in 1816, and Capt. F. W. Beechey of H.M.S. *Blossom* in 1825. Personal intercourse with the natives revealed them as a bold, uncouth, and importunate people, extraordinarily primitive in social, domestic, and quasi-religious affairs, and daring thieves.

Meanwhile, the whaling industry was being developed in the Pacific; and ships engaged in it put in, from time to time, at the island for fresh provisions. In 1805 the brig *Nancy*, of New London, kidnapped twelve men and ten women of the island to work in a sealing gang at Más-á-fuera; and several others, who resisted capture, were shot. It is said that this outrage was repeated; and, in consequence of it and other malpractices on the part of whaling crews,¹ the natives adopted a hostile attitude towards all visitors, and pelted several boats' crews with stones.

(2) MISSIONS AND VISITS OF SHIPS

H.M.S. *Seringapatam*, Captain the Hon. William Waldegrave, called at the island in 1830; and Rear-Admiral Moresby, in H.M.S. *Portland*, communicated with the natives in 1852, but without anchoring. Little more was heard of Easter Island until 1862, when Lieut. Lejeune, commanding the French gunvessel *Cassini*, called there and found the natives friendly, but impudent thieves. His account of their untutored savagery and abandoned condition moved Père Montiton, a French missionary from the Tuamotu

¹ Kotzebue, i. 133; Moerenhout, ii. 278.

atolls, who was then resting at Valparaiso, to offer himself as a pioneer missionary among the Easter Islanders ; and, after some alterations of plan, a mission was instituted by the *Congrégation du Sacré-Cœur*, in the execution of which, under conditions of great wretchedness and no small peril to life, the names of Frère Eugène Eyraud and Père Hippolyte Roussel stand pre-eminent. Eyraud first landed at Easter Island on January 4, 1864, and remained there nine months, without any European companion.

A little before this time, the employment of Chinese coolies in the guano diggings at the Chincha Islands (near Callao) not yielding the results expected, several Peruvian vessels put to sea and visited certain Pacific islands, where their crews committed flagrant slave-raids in quest of labourers to replace the Chinese. These marauders made more than one descent upon Easter Island in the years 1862-3, and succeeded in carrying off, by stratagem combined with violence and murder, several hundreds of the natives, including the principal Chief, Maurata, and other men of influence. Some of the acts of the slavers, being committed on islands within the French Protectorate, were reported to the authorities at Tahiti ; and, on the representations of French officials, the Peruvian Government intervened to put an end to the traffic and, in 1863, ordered the return of the forced labourers to their homes. By that time, however, the majority of them, including Maurata, had died ; and, when the remnant of the victims—just one hundred in number—were embarked about the middle of that year, they carried small-pox with them. Only fifteen individuals survived to reach their native soil, and these infected the inhabitants left behind. In consequence of these events, no more than 1,200 persons, out of a population which the best authorities compute to have once num-

bered 3,000, remained alive when Frère Eugène arrived ; and the epidemic was still raging.¹ In October 1864 Frère Eugène returned to Tahiti to recuperate ; but while there he fell ill of pulmonary tuberculosis. In spite of failing health he volunteered to resume his mission and, accompanied by Père Roussel, went back to Easter Island, where, however, he died on August 20, 1868, a few hours after seeing the last of the heathen natives converted to the Christian faith.² Shortly after this, deaths from phthisis became very numerous ; and the population declined rapidly from this cause and from a high rate of infant mortality.

The mission was reinforced in 1866. About the same time, a French sea-captain, Dutrou-Bornier by name, settled on the island, and soon afterwards became associated in business with a prominent firm in Tahiti, known as the Maison Brander, whose principals formed a scheme to acquire land at Rapa Nui and exploit the island as a sheep-run and cattle-station.³ The advent of Bornier changed the destiny of the islanders. He proved to be violent and unscrupulous. Disputes arose between him and the missionaries, who, after many rebuffs, had made material progress in their work. These dissensions gave rise to factions among the natives, which ripened into an attitude of open defiance between the adherents of the mission on the one side and Bornier's supporters on the other. Acts of pillage, incendiarism, and personal violence ensued ; it is stated that three or four persons were killed, that Bornier himself discharged a rifle at Père Roussel, that the cemetery was profaned and Frère Eugène's tomb wrecked, in July 1870.⁴ When H.M.S.

¹ *Nautical Magazine* ; Powell ; Caillot ; *Annales*.

² *Missions Catholiques*, ii. 39. When, twenty years later, Père Montiton visited the Island, he found that the natives had reverted to paganism (*Ibid.* xxvi. 195).

³ *Ibid.* vi. 382.

⁴ *Ibid.* 384-5.

Chanticleer touched at Rapa Nui four months after these events, the islanders were still divided, and had had several fights. Commander Bridges thought that they were 'dying off with rapidity'; he added that 'consumption is said to be the cause'.

On the state of anarchy becoming known to the French bishop at Tahiti, he appealed to Mr. Brander to take steps to restore order; and that gentleman went to the island himself. Peace was only secured by the withdrawal of the mission, with some 300 of its adherents, to the Gambier Islands, and the removal of about 500 more, who, finding life no longer tolerable at home, consented to work for terms of three and five years on Mr. Brander's plantations at Tahiti, where a large number of them speedily died. Only 175 were left at Rapa Nui with Bornier, many of them against their will; and these soon dwindled, by disease and emigration, to 100.¹

(3) RELATIONS WITH CHILE

In 1870 the Chilean corvette *O'Higgins*, Capt. Goñi, proceeded to Easter Island and was thought to have annexed it on behalf of the Government of that Republic;² but the Congress paper containing the commander's report affords no ground for believing that such was the case.³ It was stated in 1895 and 1899 that 'this island is now used as a Chilean penitentiary',⁴ and Petermann says that, when possession was definitely taken in 1888, it was with that object in view.⁵

¹ *Missions Catholiques*, vi. 385-6.

² On the visit in 1870, see Appendix ii, p. 57.

³ *Memoria*, 83 et seq.

⁴ *Longmans' Gazetteer*, 1895; '*The Times' Gazetteer*, 1899.

⁵ *Petermanns Mitteilungen*, 1888, p. 374: 'Endlich hat sich die chilenische Regierung im Juli der durch ihre eigenartigen Skulpturen berühmten Oster-Insel bemächtigt, um hierbei eine Strafkolonie zu verlegen.'

Whatever intention the Chilean authorities may at one time have had, it is certain that effect was never given to any views of the latter kind.

M. Caillot states, in his *Histoire de la Polinésie orientale* (page 485):

‘ En 1872 la reine¹ de Rapa-nui avait adressé à Tahiti une demande de Protectorat; et, en 1881, un chef et une vingtaine d’indigènes étaient venus à Papeete pour demander la nomination d’un résident. Le gouvernement français avait remercié la souveraine et donné l’espoir d’une prochaine annexion, puis répondu au chef et aux indigènes qu’il les considérait comme ses protégés, mais qu’il ne disposait pas d’assez de fonds pour placer dans leur île un fonctionnaire en permanence.’

The *O’Higgins* revisited Easter Island in March 1875, when Capt. López found the population to consist of 70 men, 25 women, about 100 children, and Bornier, besides a Danish carpenter and his wife (a Chileña). Madame Bornier was then the ‘reina’ or autocrat of the place, and partitioned the land as she chose. The stock consisted of 4,000 sheep, 70 head of cattle, 20 ponies, and 300 swine, all thriving well. Fowls and rabbits ran semi-wild.²

When the French cruiser *Seignelay* touched at Easter Island in 1877, Bornier was dead. He had been killed by the natives some months before, although he was married to their chiefess and had had two daughters by her; but the natives asserted that he had died after a fall from his horse.³ The fact that he was murdered was afterwards established, and is recorded by Fleet-Surgeon Hay, who was at the island in H.M.S. *Constance*, in March 1884, and it is not now disputed.

¹ This was the native woman whom Bornier married.

² *Anuario de la Marina de Chile*, 1876.

³ Pinart. M. Caillot quotes August 1876 as the date of Bornier’s death.

At this date the resident agent for Mr. Brander was August Lander, a German, who succeeded Mr. Alexander Salmon in that capacity a year or so after H.M.S. *Sappho's* visit in 1882. Lander flew the British red ensign, as Salmon had done before him. He reported that Mr. Brander (senior) had died at Tahiti in 1877, and that his widow, a Tahitian princess, had married a Mr. Darsie, between whom and the French bishop a lawsuit was pending in respect of land in Easter Island sold by the mission to Brander but not paid for. The Darsies were said to be willing, however, to sell all their interest in the island; and it was probable that a fresh firm would be formed 'to own and work it'.¹ There were at that time 12,000 sheep, more than 1,000 cattle, and a few horses on the estate; and the export of wool amounted to 25 or 30 tons in the year. Hides and salted beef were also shipped away; the pigs and goats had all been killed off. The population numbered 160, and observed no kind of religious worship.

(4) ANNEXATION BY CHILE

About 1883 Easter Island had begun to attract notice as a possible place for a coaling station for merchant steamers that might be expected to use the projected route to or from Australasia by the Panama Canal. In July 1888 the Chilean cruiser *Angamos* visited Easter Island; and her commander, Seor Toro, hoisted the flag of that Republic on shore. The British

¹ Admiralty records. Mr. Brander, senior, who founded the 'Maison Brandere' at Tahiti, died there shortly before the *Seignelay's* visit, in 1877. His widow was Titaua Marama, daughter of the high Chiefess Ari'i-ochau by her English husband Mr. Salmon, of London. The marriage of Mrs. Brander to Mr. George Darsie took place in 1878; and, after parting with their interest in Easter Island, they retired to Scotland in 1892, where Titaua (Mrs. Darsie) died, at Anstruther, in 1898, Mr. Darsie surviving her 20 years.

consul at Tahiti, Captain Talbot, was informed that the Chilean Government had purchased property there, with a view, it was said, to colonization; and that a brother of Commander Toro had been appointed its first Governor.¹

More light was thrown on the action taken by the Chilean Government in a communication to the Foreign Office from Consul Simons (at Tahiti) showing that in 1888, during Señor Balmaceda's Government, Chile purchased through Commander Toro certain lands and rights on the island which were then in the possession of the French Catholic Mission at Tahiti; the flag of the Chilean Republic being hoisted by Commander Toro at the end of July 1888. At this time Mr. John Brander,² a British subject born and resident in Tahiti, was in practical possession of a great portion of Easter Island. His offer to sell his rights to the Chilean Government for £4,000 was accepted by Señor Balmaceda without the sanction of Congress.

As a consequence of the Chilean occupation affirmed by Commander Toro, the French mission, with the concurrence of the Pope, handed over its charge and its properties on Easter Island to the Archbishop of Santiago; but this arrangement produced no beneficial results for the islanders. And, when Père Georges Eich, of the French *Congrégation*, chanced to call there some years later, he considered that the natives were exposed to harsh treatment, and lived under an oppressive regime.³ The Chilean Governor was Don Alberto Sánchez, who also acted as agent for the lessees, a trading firm at Valparaiso holding the usufruct for twenty years. Sánchez was thus the autocrat of the island, and maintained his authority, both as

¹ Foreign Office records; Caillot, pp. 485-6.

² Not to be confused with his father, Mr. John Brander, senior, whose death took place in 1877.

³ *Annales*, lxx. 379-80.

a Government official and as private manager of the ranch, with the aid of three constables (Chileans). On the overthrow of the Balmaceda Government, Congress not only refused to recognize the arrangement with Mr. Brander but apparently abandoned the control of Easter Island; for Commander Toro wrote in 1895 that his Government had 'abandoned it to its own lot' and had withdrawn its representative.

(5) RECENT HISTORY

In May 1900 the Chilean corvette *Jeneral Baquedano* called at the island; in March 1903 the late Earl of Crawford paid a visit in his yacht the *Valhalla* and remained several days; and the *Jeneral Baquedano* again called in December 1904, being then near the termination of a voyage round the world, under Captain Luis Gómez. The late Alexander Agassiz arrived at the same time in the Fish Commission's steamer *Albatross*, which had been placed at his disposal by the United States Government for conducting oceanographic investigations. The Professor, assisted by his scientific staff, made a physical examination of the island and surrounding sea-bottom.

When H.M. ships *Cambrian* and *Flora* called in 1909, Capt. Nugent found that

'the Chilean Governor, Mr. Amer [*sic*], who was also the manager of the cattle ranch, had gone away in a passing ship about ten months before, and had left a Chilean half-caste (native of the island) in charge'.

The only European then on the island was an old French sailor, named Pont, who had lived there a quarter of a century. He stated that there had been no communications with the outer world for two years past, and that the mission had long since collapsed.

In 1914-15 Mr. and Mrs. Scoresby Routledge paid a long visit to Easter Island in the interests of scientific,

and especially archaeological, research, staying there sixteen months. All or nearly all of the survivors from Tahiti and the Gambier Islands mission had been sent home, with their children and grandchildren, and the natives then numbered 250. They seemed a restless, dissatisfied community, dirty and uncouth, and incorrigible thieves. They conducted their own form of worship, based on the teachings of the former French Roman Catholic missionaries, there being no longer any resident priest or lay brother. During Mrs. Routledge's stay an old woman 'dreamt' that her people were the real and exclusive owners of the island and all the property there. A spirit of revolt against the resident agent, Mr. Edmunds, and strangers in general, was thus engendered; some depredations were committed, and personal violence was threatened. The Chilean training-ship *Jeneral Baquedano*, which calls at the island about once in every two years, arrived opportunely and ended the trouble by deporting the ringleaders.¹

A significant event took place in October 1914—the breach of neutrality committed by the German cruisers *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst* under Admiral von Spee. These vessels put into Cook Bay, landed armed parties, re-provisioned with fresh meat, and set up a look-out station fitted with signalling gear on the summit of the island. In December the *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* arrived, and used the island for about a week as a base, to secure fresh meat, and to coal from a captured French collier which she afterwards sank. Before leaving she put ashore nearly fifty prisoners, English and French sailors, and abandoned them to shift for themselves.²

Finally, towards the close of 1917, or early in 1918,

¹ Routledge, in *Geographical Journal*, xlix. 326.

² Routledge, *op. cit.*, pp. 326-7.

fifty-eight officers and men who had formed part of the crew of the German raider *Seeadler*, wrecked at Mopihaa, having seized a schooner, reached Easter Island. There, either by accident or intention, this vessel was also wrecked; and the Germans were afterwards conveyed in a Chilean schooner to Valparaiso.¹

¹ *The Times*.

III. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

(1) ANCHORAGES

EASTER ISLAND possesses no harbour, nor any permanently sheltered roadstead; but vessels can bring to temporarily in fine weather under the lee of the land for the time being, on a bank of soundings in from 30 to 16 fathoms, where the bottom is sandy with rocky patches here and there. This bank extends for a mile or so to seaward almost all round the island; the shore, however, is for the most part rocky and inaccessible, and affords only some six possible landing-places, three of which have sandy beaches of small extent.

At Hanga Roa a steamer may safely approach the 16-fathom line; but the landing is not very good, shoal water full of boulders extending for some distance from the beach. This anchorage is only secure during winds from the eastward; from April to October it is liable to sudden shifts and Hanga Roa becomes a dangerous lee shore.

There is a much better landing-place at Hanga Piko, though the channel leading into it between the rocks is very narrow, and, with any swell on, the breakers are alarming.

La Pérouse Bay, which ought to be called González Roadstead, is an open stretch of two miles on the north-eastern coast. Anchorage may be found there in 17 fathoms, but preferably farther out lest the wind change suddenly. Anakena cove just to the westward of the former has a small sandy beach and affords the best landing of any, except with the wind nearly due

north. Occasionally a vessel may anchor off Waihu, but the weather must be closely watched in such case.

Far removed from all trade routes, Easter Island is visited in normal times about once a year by a small schooner from Valparaiso. A Chilean training-ship usually calls there every second year; and ships of war of other nations look in from time to time.

(2) AGRICULTURE AND PRODUCTS

Most of the island is covered with grass, but the soil is not lacking in fertility and, assisted by a generous rainfall, enables the natives to cultivate sweet potatoes, a few yams, bananas, and sugar-cane in pits sheltered from the wind, and particularly within the craters of the extinct volcanoes. Among the natural products of use to the natives one is the 'maute' (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), whose inner bark, when macerated in water and beaten out into what is known as 'tapa' or native cloth, used to be made up into wraps and clothing. Another is the 'purau' (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*), which yields a strong bast suitable for making fishing-nets, mats of a superior kind, and cordage generally. The 'ti' (*Cordyline terminalis*) is grown for the sake of its root, out of which a saccharine material is freely extracted.

The island has no trees; there probably never was much more than brushwood (*Sophora tetraptera*) and shrubs, and since the introduction of ponies, cattle, &c., even those have disappeared. There is plenty of good pasture, and as there are two and sometimes three lambing seasons in the year, the sheep multiply very rapidly.

There are few fish on the coast, but turtles are abundant, and round the southern promontory quantities of lobsters (*Palinurus paschalis*) are found, much larger than those taken in European waters.

A Chilean company, the Compañía Esplotadora de la Isla de Pascua, are the owners of about two-thirds of the land in the island, and in addition of a certain amount of live stock. They find, however, considerable difficulty in marketing the produce, although they send a schooner to the island once a year to bring away the hides and wool.

There are no indications of minerals or of phosphate rock in the island, nor is the geological formation of a kind to render their presence likely.

IV. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

THE remoteness and isolation of Easter Island and the backwardness of its native inhabitants have served to keep it far in the background of political importance. Though first visited by Dutch ships, there has been no action on the part of that nation to exploit it commercially or otherwise. The same may be said of the Spaniards—though they first annexed it—and of ourselves, though many more British ships of war and of commerce have called at it than have ships of any other nationality.

The nearest land (except the uninhabitable Sala y Gómez rock) to the eastward of Easter Island is the Chilean province of Atacama, to which, for administrative purposes, it is attached, though nearly 2,000 miles distant. To the westward the French colonies of the Tuamotu, Mangareva (Gambier), and Marquesas Islands, and the Society Group, are the only important settlements in those seas; and they are far away. British possessions in that part of the Pacific comprise no more than the three southeasternmost atolls of the Tuamotu (or 'Low') Archipelago, and Pitcairn. Of the atolls, Henderson Island has phosphatic deposits and would be valuable if they could be worked. It is the only elevated rock of the group. But landing is dangerous and seldom possible, and there is no fresh water. The only island of the four above mentioned possessing resources for permanent habitation is Pitcairn, which is 1,800 miles distant from Easter Island, and 1,125

miles from Tahiti, its only existing link with the outer world.

Easter Island cannot be esteemed of much commercial or pecuniary value ; and, since it affords but scanty facilities to shipping, its principal interest to the world appears to be archaeological.

APPENDIX

I. DECLARATION OF SPANISH POSSESSION.

Dⁿ ANTONIO ROMERO, Staff-Paymaster in the Royal Navy, at present serving on board H.M. Ship of the Line named the *San Lorenzo*.

I certify—that, by direction of Dⁿ Felipe González y Haedo, Captain in the Royal Navy, commanding this ship and the Frigate *Sta Rosalía* sailing under her escort, whom the Most Excellent Señor the Viceroy, Governor, and Captain-General of the Realm of Peru, Dⁿ Manuel de Amat, under whose orders he is, has appointed for the investigation of this island, commonly marked on the charts by the name of David's, it has on the day and date hereof been examined by sea and land, and there has, in so far as is possible, been made known to and recognized by its native inhabitants their lawful Sovereign, and his powerful arm for their defence against foreign enemies, the which they have acknowledged with many demonstrations of pleasure and rejoicing. And in testimony of so happy an issue three crosses have, by their consent, been erected on the hill which is at the North Eastern extremity of the island; and the name *Sⁿ Carlos* has been bestowed upon the said island, in the presence of the native inhabitants assembled to the number of eight hundred, and of all the officers, crew, and ship's company told off for the occasion under the command of Dⁿ JOSEF BUSTILLOS, Knight of the Order of St. James and a Commander in the Royal Navy. The which three crosses being set up in position, the litany was sung; and at its conclusion a triple salute of musketry was fired by the aforesaid seamen and ship's company, and another of twenty-one guns by the ship and the Frigate.

And in order that this Act of solemn Possession may be made known and established by evidence, I declare this at the *Island of Sⁿ Carlos*: the 20th of November, 1770.—
Dⁿ ANTONIO ROMERO.

II. CHILEAN EXPEDITION IN 1870

Mr. Thomson, His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Santiago, reported (No. 4, January 16, 1870) that the Chilean corvette *O'Higgins* was about to visit Easter (Pascua) Island. He said that, so far as he was aware, no special reason for the cruise had been made public; he was, however, disposed to infer that the Chilean Government had some ulterior views of annexing the island should the commander of the *O'Higgins* report favourably as to its value.

In the following March, Mr. Thomson (No. 19, March 14) reported the return of the *O'Higgins*, after a stay of seven days at the island, and quoted the following passage from the official report of the expedition:

'Desirous to lose no time, I named the Commissions which were to employ themselves in making a plan of the island, of its port, and the creeks which might serve as anchorage grounds, and at the same time I instructed Commander Don Ignacio L. Gana, Director of the School of Naval Cadets, to obtain the necessary data so that the Supreme Government might be furnished with the complete and detailed report they had prescribed in their instructions issued to me.

'On the island there are some Roman Catholic Missionaries, dependent on the Bishopric of Tahiti, and, in a memorial addressed by them to the Intendant of Valparaiso, in alluding to the generous supplies which the Supreme Government had sent them through him, they request him to express their most grateful thanks to the Supreme Government.'

Mr. Thomson remarked that these expressions and the general tenor of the reports furnished would seem to confirm the inference he had drawn in his earlier dispatch as to the intention of the Chilean Government to take possession of the island as Chilean territory.

Copies of these two dispatches were sent to the Admiralty. It will be seen that they by no means assert that the Chilean Government had in fact taken possession of the island. (From papers at the F.O.)

III. TERMS OF LEASE OF EASTER ISLAND GRANTED
IN 1895 TO SEÑOR ENRIQUE MERLET BY THE
CHILEAN GOVERNMENT.

Extract from 'A Report by the Minister of Colonization presented to the National Congress, in 1895'. [Santiago de Chile, 1896.] Section—Terrenos Fiscales, pp. vii-x.

'EASTER ISLAND, situated at a considerable distance from our coast-line, and where the State has in past years incurred expenditure with a view to acquiring a foothold which would permit of the Republic's sovereignty being exercised over it, remained for some time without the Government having come to any conclusion regarding its future.

'In order to invest it with some utility it was decided to let it on lease, and by a Resolution of the 22nd of June this year sealed tenders were publicly invited for such a tenancy.

[Tenders were accordingly called for, and opened on August 29th, 1895, when Señor Merlet's offer received the preference and was accepted on the following conditions:]

'1. The State grants, under a lease to Señor Merlet for a period of twenty years from this date, the lands, buildings, fixtures, and live stock belonging to the national Treasury, in the aforesaid island.

'2. The annual rental shall be the sum of one thousand two hundred *pesos* (\$1,200), to be paid into the Treasury at Valparaiso half-yearly in advance: and in the event of such payment becoming more than one hundred and eighty days overdue this agreement shall be cancelled.

'3. Señor Merlet binds himself to maintain at least three Chilean families in the island at his own expense, as a nucleus of a settlement [or colony].

'4. On the termination of the lease Señor Merlet will deliver over to the State without fee or remuneration the lands and fixtures which he shall have received by virtue of this Agreement, together with the improvements he may have introduced there, and will leave for possession by the State the following live stock, namely:—five thousand six hundred head of sheep, two hundred and fifty of horned cattle, forty ponies, and four asses.

' 5. Señor Merlet undertakes to maintain direct communication between the island and some [*sic*] of the ports of the Chilean coast, at least once in each year.

' 6. On occasions when the Government may dispatch ships of war on training voyages during which it may be possible to call at Easter Island, it will facilitate, free of any charge to Señor Merlet, the passages of Chilean colonists to the said island, and also the conveyance of tools and implements of labour.

' 7. Señor Merlet will provide dwelling accommodation for such person in the Government's service as it may station at the island, and will allot an office suitable for his installation.

' 8. The lessee will cause accommodation to be built for the storage of coal which the Government may wish to deposit for the use of Chilean ships of war.

' 9. Señor Merlet will supply free of charge the fresh meat required as provisions for their crews by national ships of war calling at Easter Island.

' 10. In the event of national ships of war putting in with any members of their crews sick, and needing to be landed, Señor Merlet binds himself to afford them hospitality and assistance without its constituting a claim against the State.

' 11. Don Enrique Merlet undertakes to equip a landing-place for cargo which shall afford safe conditions for the purpose.

' 12. Should the State deem proper to establish a village settlement (*centro de población*) in the island it shall be free to make use of an area of land necessary for this purpose.

' 13. Señor Merlet will give a guarantee, approved by the Director of the Treasury, for the due fulfilment of this Agreement.

' 14. That officer, representing the Exchequer, will sign the public document embodying the present decree [or Order in Council, or Resolution].

' Let this be put on record, registered, notified, and published.—MONTT.—*Claudio Matte*.

' Santiago, 29th of August, 1895.

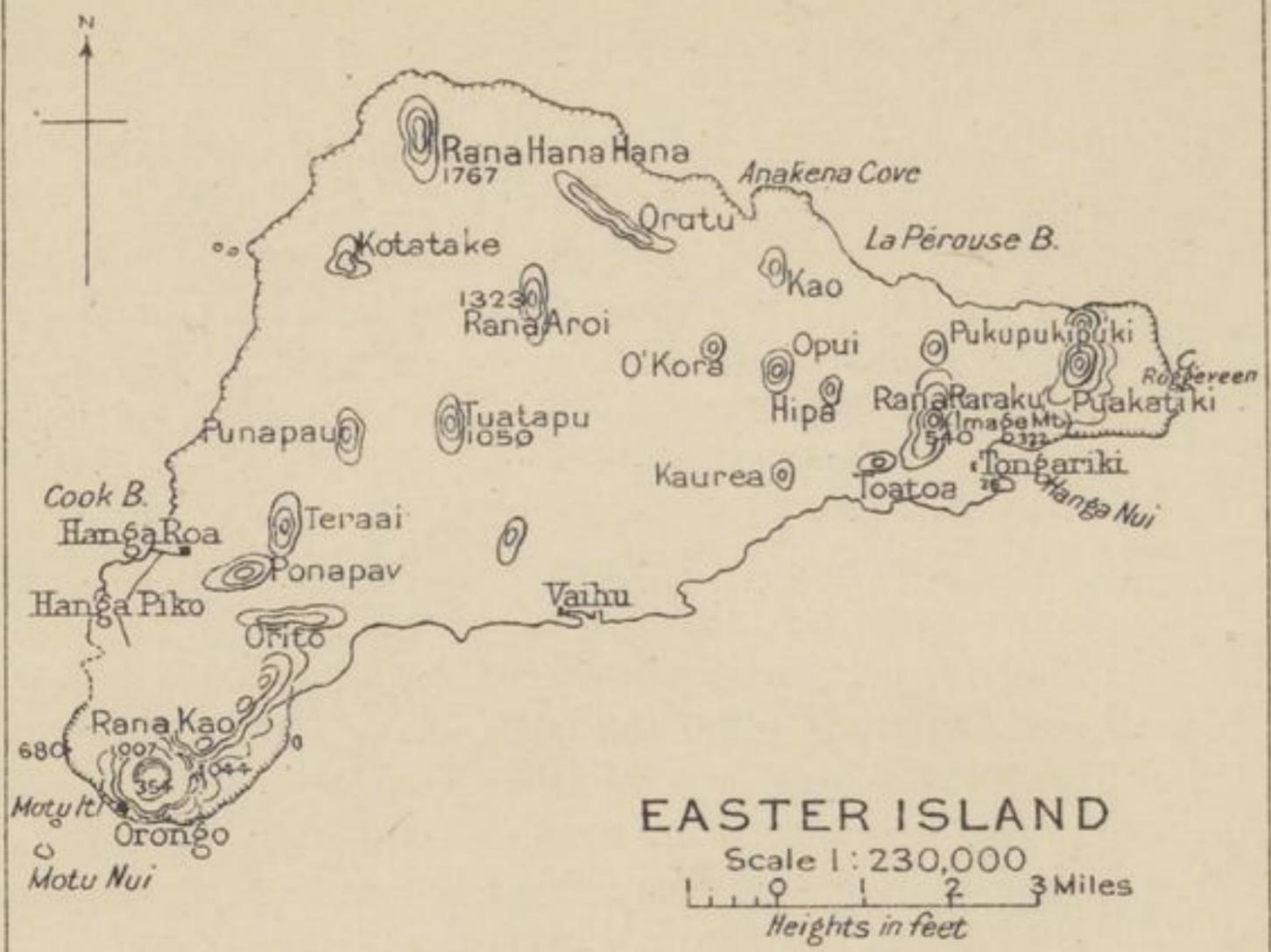
' By a decree of the 24th of June last an Inspector of colonization was appointed for the above-mentioned island, without salary.'

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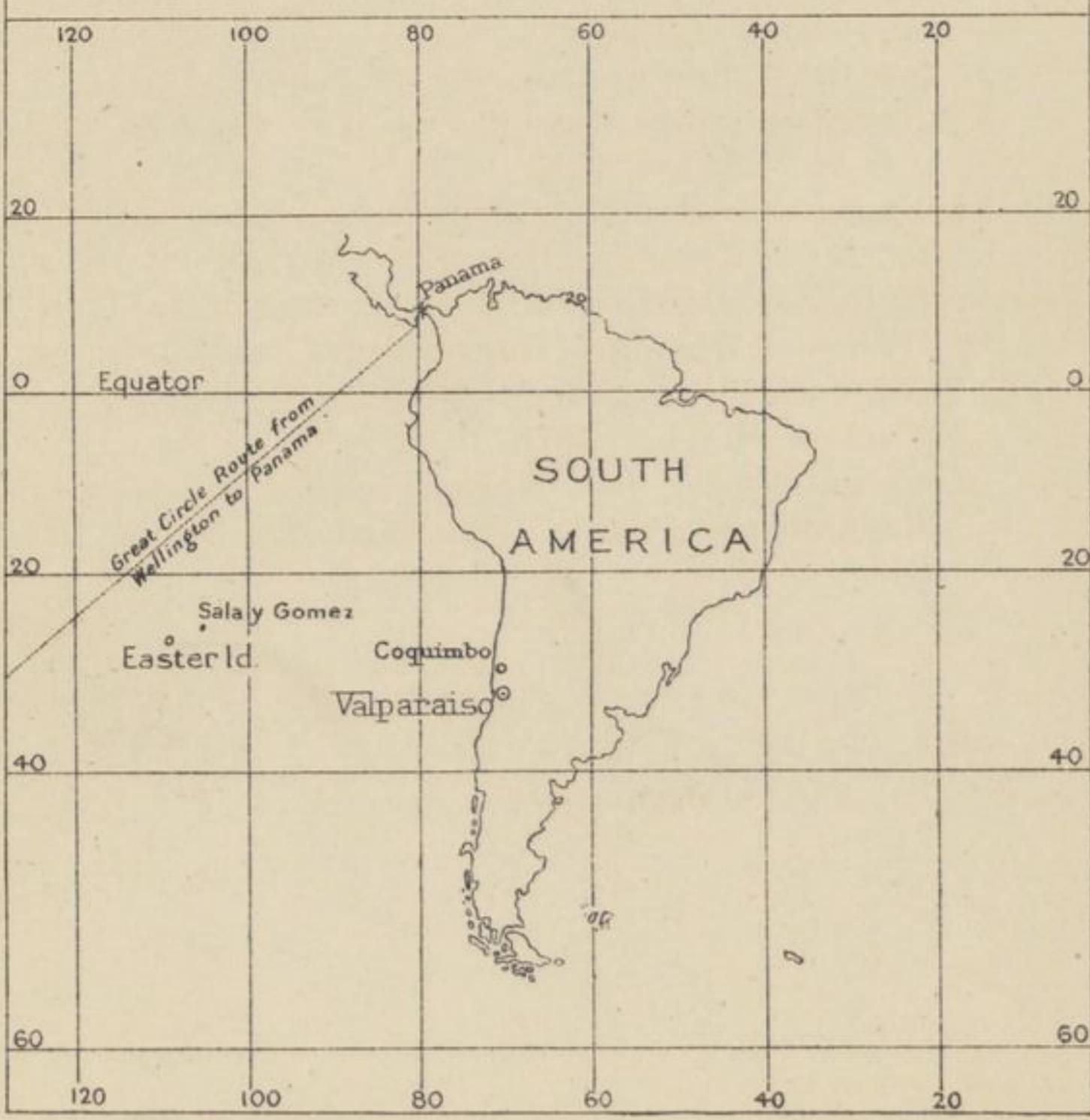
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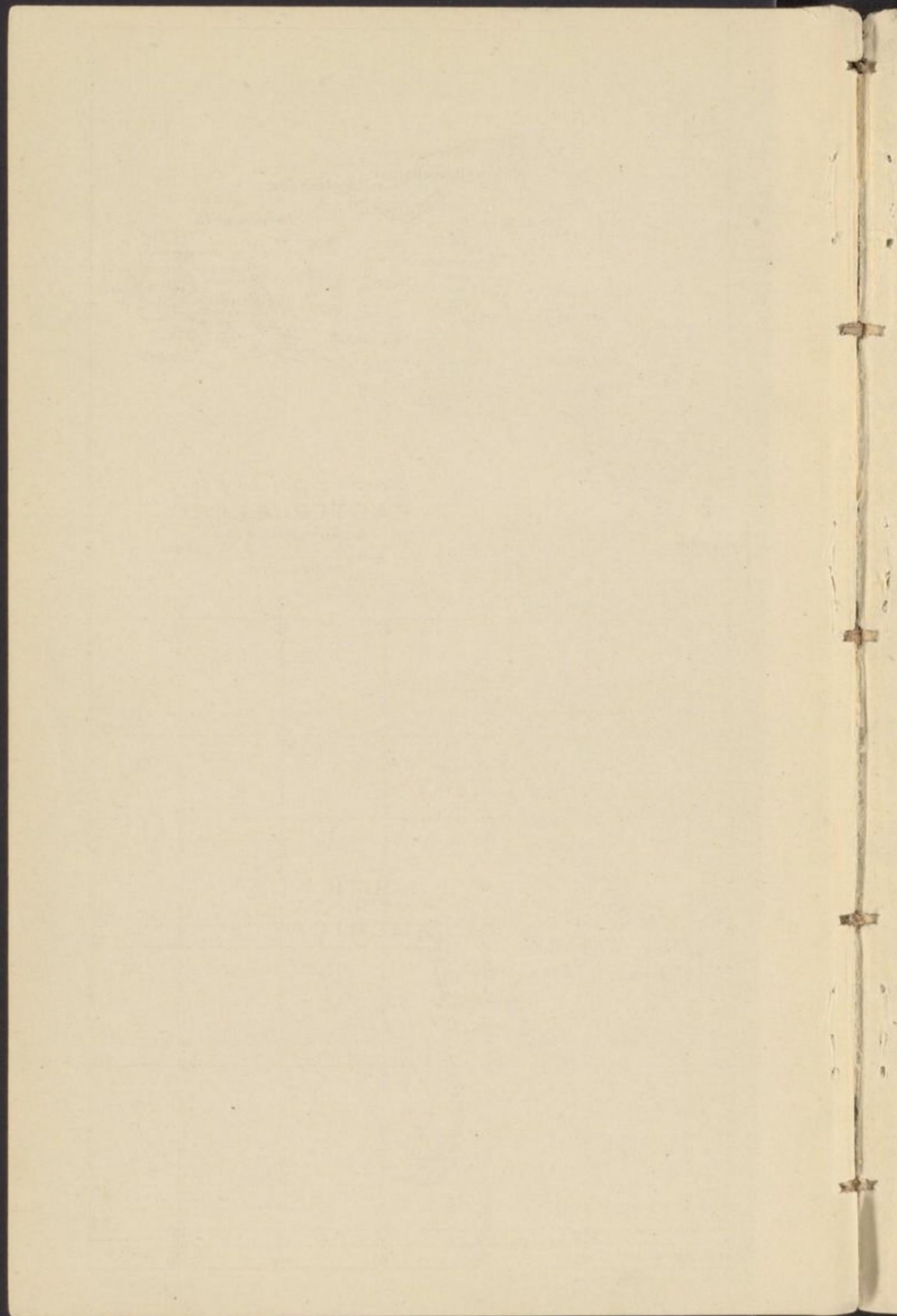
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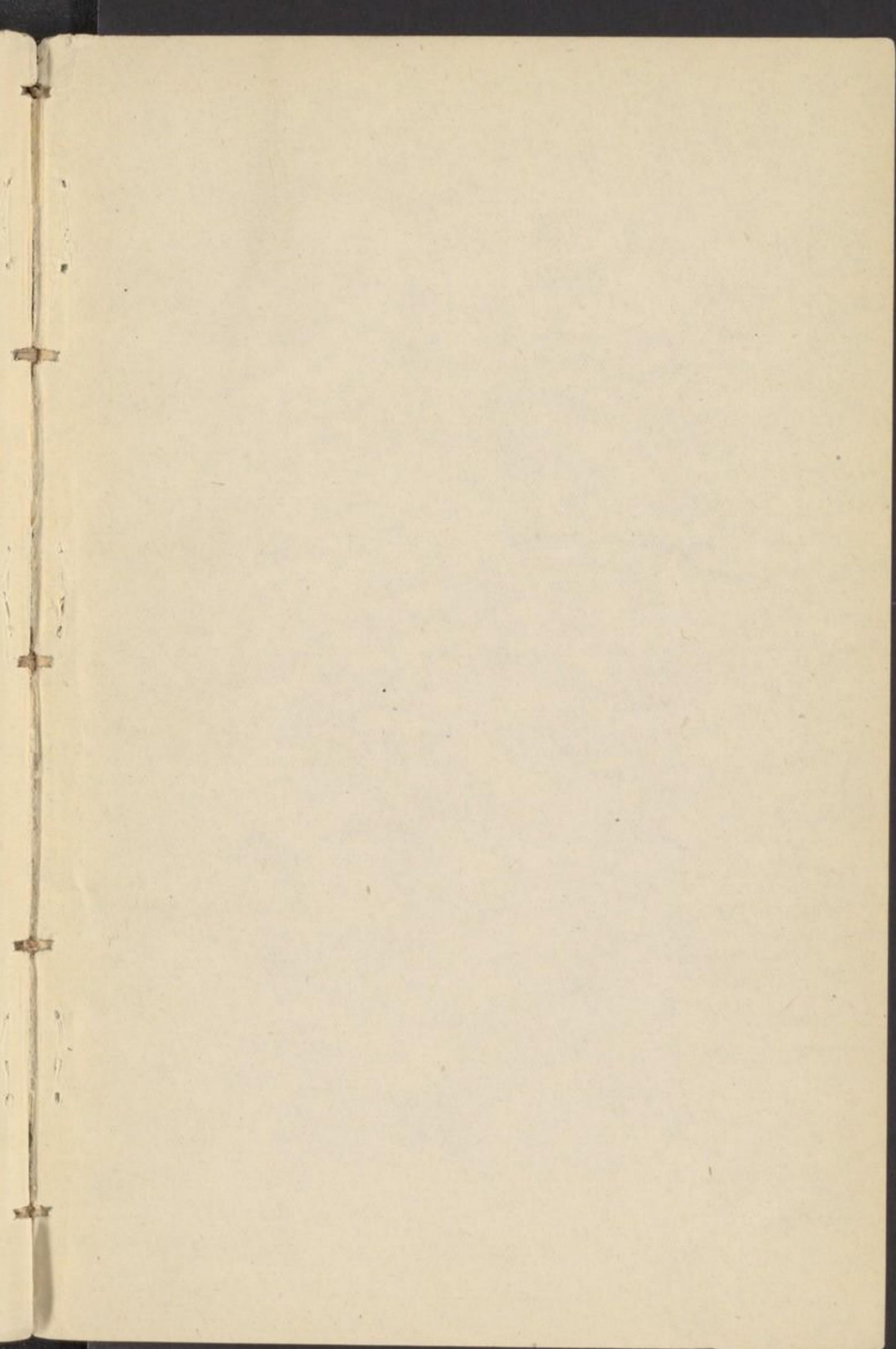
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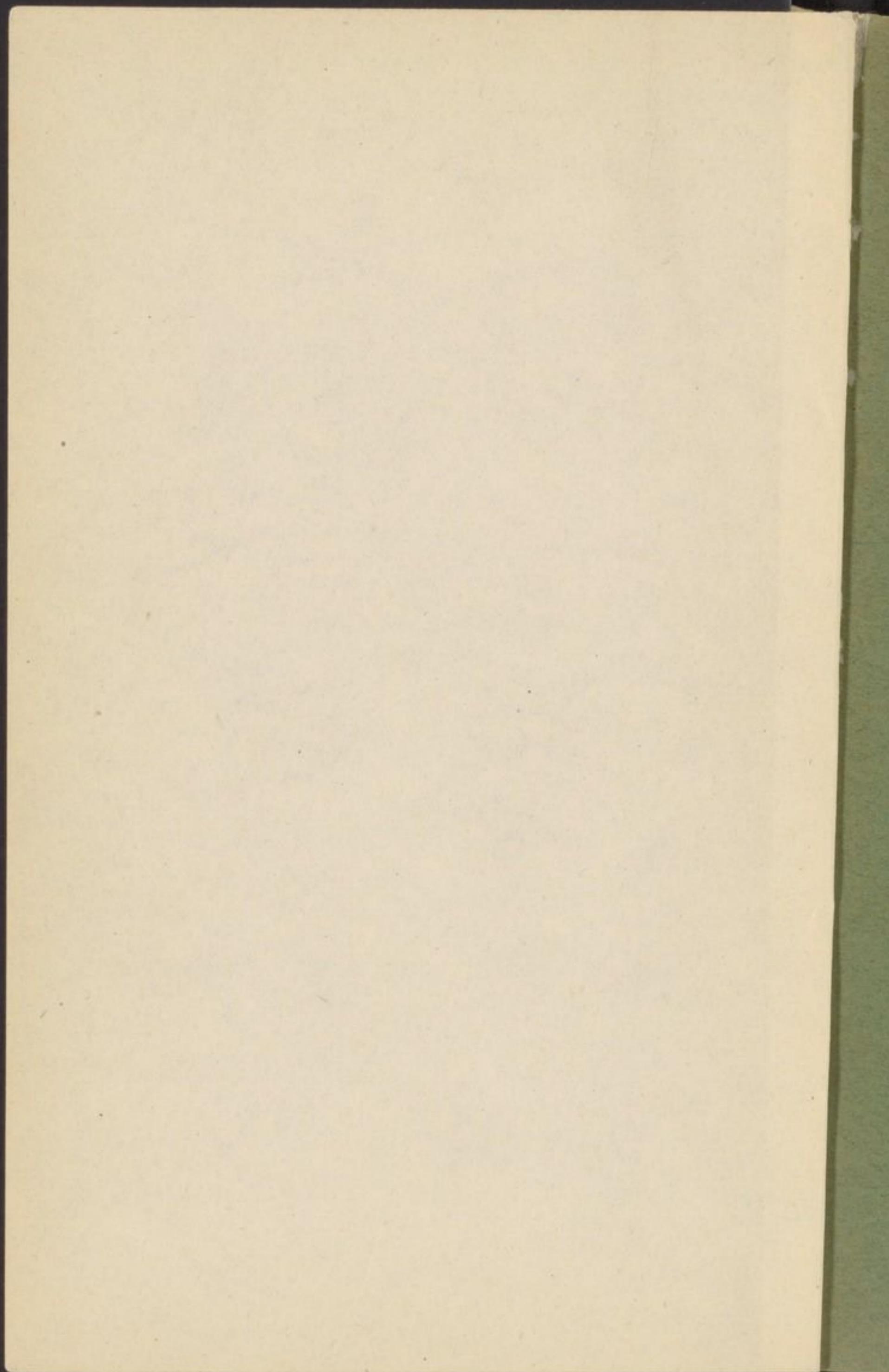


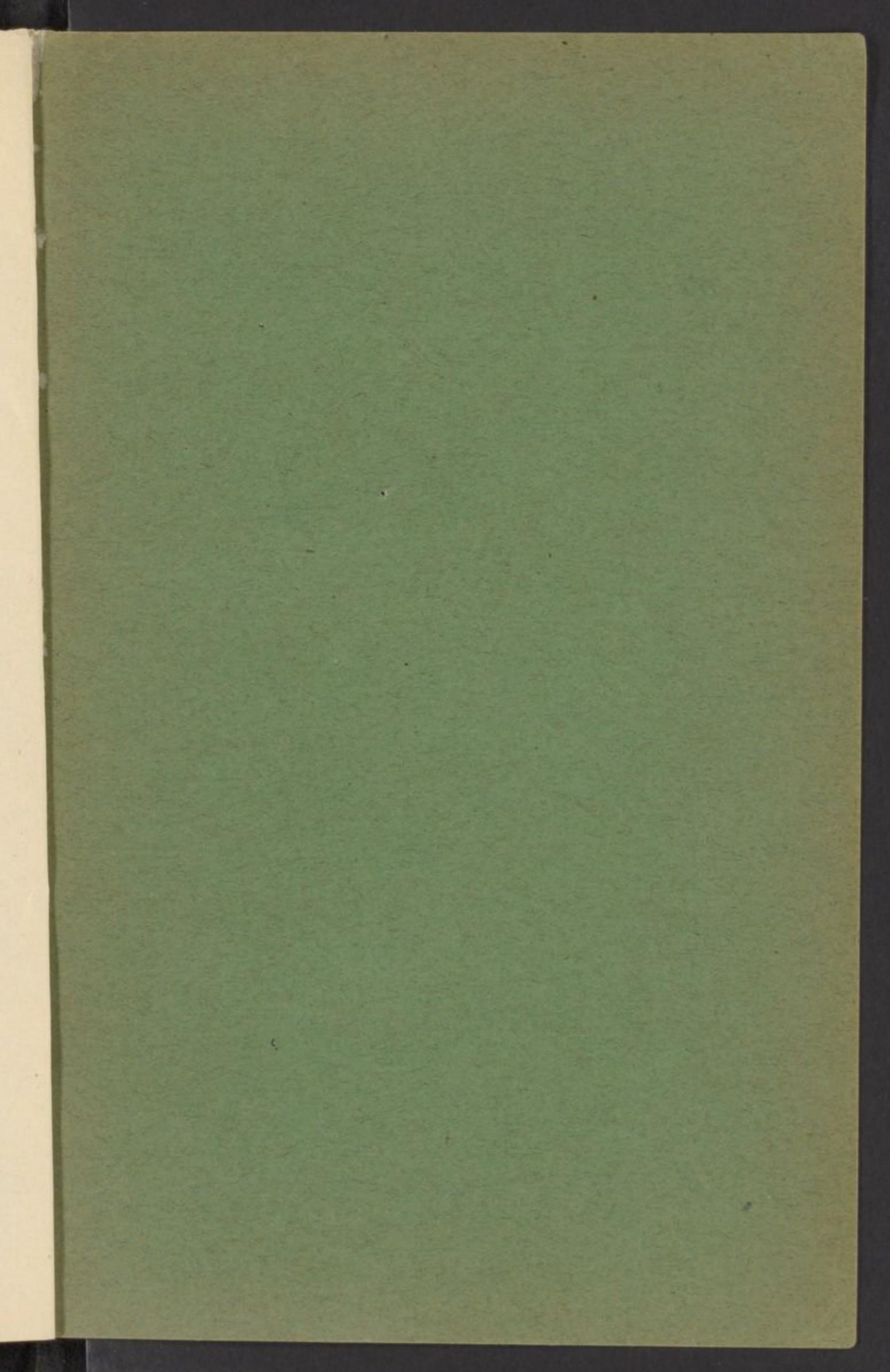
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