

Chapter 10

RIPOSTE AND REPRISE

... I have given the name of the Strait of the Mother of God, to what was formerly known as the Strait of Magellan... because she is Patron and Advocate of these regions... From it will result high honour and glory to the Kings of Spain... and to the Spanish nation, who will execute the work, there will be no less honour, profit, and increase.

... they died like dogges in their houses, and in their clothes, wherein we found them still at our comming, untill that in the ende the towne being wonderfully taynted with the smell and the savour of the dead people, the rest which remayned alive were driven... to forsake the towne... In this place we watered and woodded well and quietly. Our Generall named this towne Port famine...

The Spanish riposte: Sarmiento¹

Francisco de Toledo lamented briefly that ‘the sea is so wide, and [Drake] made off with such speed, that we could not catch him’; but he was ‘not a man to dally in contemplations’,² and within ten days of the hang-dog return of the futile pursuers of the corsair he was planning to lock the door by which that low fellow had entered. Those whom he had sent off on that fiasco seem to have been equally, and reasonably, terrified of catching Drake and of returning to report failure; and we can be sure that the always vehement Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa let his views on their conduct be known. He already had the Viceroy’s ear, having done him signal if not too scrupulous service in the taking of the unfortunate Tupac Amaru (above, Ch. 3) and in the denigration of Inca polity by the compiling of the *Historia de los Incas*, an enquiry designed to contrast the benevolence of Spanish rule under law with the capricious tyranny of the Incas;³ and it was natural that Toledo should choose him to lead the expedition to the Straits, his first independent command.

Sarmiento was indeed one of the most remarkable men of his age; perhaps the last in whom the ardent and indomitable spirit of the Conquistadores burned with all its ancient power. Seaman and soldier, navigator and cosmographer, scholar and explorer, poet of sorts and an official censor of poets,⁴ he was also

Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, 12 February 1580 (in Markham, *Narratives*, 121); Francis Pretty, January 1586 (Hakluyt, VIII.214); both at the site of Ciudad del Rey Don Felipe, now Port Famine or Puerto Hambre.

something of a sorcerer, specialising in love-magic, and hence more than once in serious trouble with the Inquisition and needing all Toledo's influence to get him out of it; quarrelsome, and obviously not one to suffer fools gladly or at all, still less knaves and poltroons, and far too ready to pass such judgments; but at all times and in all emergencies possessed of a clear and practical head, unlimited devotion to his duty and all but unlimited faith in his star, and above everything a most iron resolution—

A Frame of Adamant, A Soul of Fire,
No Dangers fright him, and no Labours tire.⁵

He was to have more than his share of both.

Toledo, though unwell, came down to Callao to inspect the available ships by lantern light, right down to the keel; for all that, and in part due to Toledo's drive for haste, the capitana began to leak as soon as they sailed, and had to put into Pisco for repairs. Sarmiento was given two ships, the *Nuestra Señora de Esperanza* as flag and the *San Francisco*, under Juan de Villalobos, as almiranta. Their complements were about 110 officers, sailors, and soldiers, plus a few Indian or mestizo servants; and each ship had two medium-sized artillery pieces and forty arquebuses. This slight armament gives a touch of unrealism to the instruction that should Sarmiento fall in with 'Francisco Draquez, the English Pirate . . . you are to endeavour to take, kill, or destroy him. . . .' It is not surprising that recruitment was Sarmiento's greatest difficulty.

His instructions were lengthy—ten pages in Markham's translation—but their essence was that he should carry out a detailed exploration of the Straits, including all entries into them, so that all pirates' holes should be stopped; he was to prepare charts and sailing directions and to note the most promising places for settlements and especially for fortifications, and to take formal possession wherever he landed. After entering the Atlantic, one ship was to be sent back to Peru with despatches (reports should also be sent overland from La Plata), while Sarmiento himself was to go on to Spain to report to the Council of the Indies and the King. This program was faithfully executed: Sarmiento's descriptions of the Straits themselves and their tangled western approaches were extremely detailed, many of his names surviving: the monument to this part of his work is the towering Mount Sarmiento, so named by Robert Fitzroy. And he made no fewer than thirteen Acts of Possession.

Sarmiento sailed from Callao on 11 October 1579, but was held up for some days repairing at Pisco. He took Juan Fernandez' recently discovered course, well to the west of his island, and saw land on 17 November on Golfo Trinidad (50°S). The next two months were spent in the detailed and arduous exploration, largely by boat, of the intricate channels between Isla Hanover and the mainland (Fig. 21), penetrating as far as the southern end of Cordillera Sarmiento in about 52° 10'. Christmas was spent at Puerto Bermejo in the south of Isla Madre de Dios, where Villalobos had been building a bergantin and (according to

Sarmiento) deliberately using up provisions to have an excuse for returning home: Sarmiento put a stop to this. But discussion with his pilots convinced him that there was no point in continuing to search for a passage in the labyrinth of inner channels, where indeed the British naval hydrographers of the nineteenth century bestowed such names as Obstruction Sound, Disappointment Bay, Small Hope and Last Hope Inlets . . .

On 21 January 1580 they left Puerto Bermejo to sail south into the open ocean, and on the 30th the *Esperanza* entered the Strait itself, but meanwhile Villalobos, who in Sarmiento's opinion had been dragging his feet ever since Pisco, had parted company in a tempest and returned to Valparaiso. He may have been driven as far south as 56° or more, to find like Drake that the two Oceans joined 'sin impedimentos ni barreras'; but if he did so report, no notice was taken: the belief that the barrier was pierced by but a single channel was too useful for Spain to be lightly given up.⁶

Inside the Straits, Sarmiento waited for a few days for the *San Francisco* and then, overruling the strong pleas of his pilots for a return, went on his way, again carefully charting and recording the topography, occasionally contacting the Indians and collecting (naturally) very confused misinformation from them, kidnapping a few to be baptised and trained as interpreters, liberally taking possession, and renaming the Strait for the Mother of God: as Subercaseaux remarks, posterity paid not the slightest attention to this. He never lost sight of his major task of assessing the potentialities for settlement and defence. His evaluation is hardly glowing: between the Second and First Narrows they saw 'great downlands . . . very agreeable to the sight and with very beautiful greenery, like arable fields',⁷ and although hereabouts it was still liable to cold squalls, it was warmer than the country to the west, with potential for livestock, grain, and a large population; according to one of the natives, there was cotton, a sure sign of mild climate. This is very tepid as the prospectus for a colony, and clearly Sarmiento's zeal for his patriotic assignment led him later on to take, in retrospect, too rosy a view of these inhospitable shores, whose exploitation with the vastly enhanced resources and techniques of the later nineteenth century was to prove partial and painful enough.

The hazards of the voyage were not over when they emerged into the Atlantic on 24 February. Blown far offshore, they had hardly the vaguest idea of their position until Sarmiento improvised an instrument to find the longitude by lunar distances, in itself a notable feat.⁸ On 23 May they had a successful brush with a better-armed French corsair off Santiago in the Cape Verdes, and later in the day were looked on askance in the port: they had wild long-haired Indians with them, were powder-grimed from the fight, and could scarcely spare water to freshen themselves up. They managed to establish their *bona fides* as Spaniards most surprisingly from Peru, and at the Governor's request Sarmiento took on men and guns and drove the pirates away; but for all that, they were not welcome. King Sebastião's mad crusade into Morocco had ended in the annihilation

of Alcacer-Kebir, and in the interregnum following the death of his aged successor, the Cardinal-King Henrique, the political crisis in Portugal had reached explosion-point. On the very day that Sarmiento weighed from Santiago, the bastard Dom Antonio was popularly acclaimed King; but Philip II had as good or better a title and bigger battalions, and within a week the Duke of Alba was marching on Lisbon. When Sarmiento reached the Azores in mid-July, followed immediately by a Portuguese Indies squadron, the situation was so tense that his people stood to arms, with lighted match, all night, to be relieved next day by the arrival of the New Spain fleet of twenty-two sail, more than enough to overawe Dom Antonio's followers. Sarmiento went on with this fleet, and on 19 August reached Spain: under ten months and two weeks from Callao to San Lucar.

This voyage, as Clissold remarks, was Sarmiento's most successful exploit, though not his most ambitious. It was not, as is sometimes stated, the first west to east passage of the Straits: setting aside the very dubious instances in the 1520s mentioned by Landín Carrasco, there was Ladrillero in 1558 and from Drake's fleet Winter, possibly Carder.⁹ But it was certainly the first direct voyage from Peru to Spain, and in Toledo's view the expected fortification of the Straits would provide a more economical trade route between the two, by cutting out the Isthmus portage, and would enable the endless wars in Chile to be more efficiently supported.¹⁰ Moreover, Sarmiento's careful sailing directions were to meet with very appreciative recognition by Fitzroy and King, more than two centuries later.¹¹ But the immediate sequel was to see the utter wreckage of his hopes.

A mismanaged Odyssey

Sarmiento reported in person to King Philip in September 1580, a few days before Drake reached Plymouth. At the Cape Verdes and the Azores he had picked up wild rumours of English fleets for the Straits, English settlers in Brazil; and in the midst of his Portuguese venture, Philip had to turn his attention to this threat on the other side of the ocean. Morale, however, had been much enhanced by the acquisition of the neighbour kingdom with its naval strength, and for once at least little time was lost in deciding to mount a powerful expedition to settle and fortify the Straits, which would be much facilitated by the Brazilian bases.

As to the fortifications, the most expert opinion was sought: the Duke of Alba and the great admiral Santa Cruz approved, the former at first with reservations—it was a most important thing to be done *if* it could be done, and perhaps a stout boom across the narrows and some gunboats would be cheaper and as efficient. But Sarmiento's conviction prevailed: solid forts, backed by a colony to provision them, would be the real answer, and the Italian military engineer Juan Bautista Antonelli was called in to design them.¹² Following Toledo's hint, the fleet was to take out 600 soldiers for Chile, under Don Alonso de Sotomayor. In contrast to this careful military planning, the arrangements for a colony, so distant and in so little-known a region, were

cursor: simply that Sarmiento was authorised to recruit, 'without expenses to His Majesty', a hundred or so settlers.¹³

Preparations were put in hand at Seville with much vigour; but they were vitiated by a fatal flaw in the command structure. Despite his relative lack of experience in command, Sarmiento had shown himself not only a very skilful navigator but a most resolute leader; he had succeeded in all his public undertakings and fully justified the trust of so notable a ruler of men as Toledo. He might therefore have reasonably expected overall command of the enterprise; but by the norms of Court life, so great an armada—twenty-three ships—should be headed by a man of high social standing. It is difficult to see Sarmiento working happily under any leader but one of the stature of Toledo or Alba or Santa Cruz; and even a milder man than he, one less utterly convinced of his own rightness and powers, might have resented being passed over. Almost any available choice of a commander over Sarmiento would probably have led to great difficulties; the actual choice of Diego Flores de Valdes was a disaster.

As prickly and quarrelsome as Sarmiento himself, he had the appropriate social rank and considerable experience in the more or less routine task of conveying the Seville fleets across the Atlantic, but these seem the sum total of his qualifications. He had no initiative and was no leader, his very inept showing as the reluctant chief of staff to the reluctant commander Medina Sidonia in 1588 finally demonstrating his unfitness.¹⁴ From the start he was averse to the Straits project, perhaps resenting being taken from his comfortable and profitable convoy command to face unknown hazards and hardships. We need not believe more than a fraction of Sarmiento's anguished allegations of malevolence, deliberate sabotage, corruption (though this was likely enough in a convoy commander), and even personal cowardice; discounting a great deal, it remains clear that his appointment to overall command of the fleet—but of the fleet only, Sarmiento being designated Governor and Captain-General of the projected colony—was a recipe for fiasco; not to mention the insertion of a third element in the command, Sotomayor and his Chilean force.

Sarmiento accepted the situation, after a protest of a stiffness to which His Majesty was probably unaccustomed, and set to work. At Seville, conditions were chaotic. To begin with, Diego Flores practically washed his hands of the detail work. Everything, except bureaucracy and peculation, was in short supply. Somehow or other Sarmiento and a few other devoted officials managed to collect ships and stores, men and munitions, including some 300 colonists (nearly a third of them children) caught up, by God knows what inducements, from the grinding life of the Andalusian peasantry: the nominal roll still exists, the names of the nameless, 'Juan perez su mujer maria y tres hijos. . .'.¹⁵ By the time that all was more or less ready, the season was so far advanced that it would have been better to wait till the next year; they should have left in August at latest, and when that month was past they risked losing all, 'as one who goes to slaughter',¹⁶ and Flores and Sarmiento were for once agreed in protesting when

Medina Sidonia forced them to put to sea, being towed out over the San Lucar bar, on 25 September 1581.¹⁷ The expected equinoctial storm did not fail them: within a week six ships and 800 men were lost, and the battered remainder made Cadiz with great difficulty.

They sailed again on 9 December, with orders to winter at Rio de Janeiro, to ward off expected French corsairs; this to the dismay of Sarmiento, who feared the ravages of the *broma* (ship-worm) and 'other inconveniences'. His fears were well founded: they reached Rio on 24 March 1582, and from then on Sarmiento's narrative, not lacking in complaints hitherto, becomes an unending round of recrimination. As he had no authority over the fleet, he was able only occasionally, and then by violent action, to check the ships' companies (from the highest officers down) from selling gear and stores and stocking up with profitable Brazil timber and dye-wood. Much powder was wasted in salutes and fireworks, and Sarmiento trembled for fear of shortages in the Straits: they fired off more arquebus shots than there were hairs on his head, and each shot 'struck me to the heart . . . Your Majesty ties my hands . . . alone and without authority, I can do no more, but my blood scalds me. . . .'¹⁸ Clearly by this time Sarmiento is almost paranoid in his anguish; yet he did his best to look after the sick and to keep his people employed in constructing prefabricated houses for the Straits; even so, morale was naturally abysmal. Soon it was being said that not even to seduce a soul would the Devil himself dare to enter the Strait.¹⁹ Only a madman like Pedro Sarmiento. . . .

When at last they left Rio, Flores insisted that Sarmiento should not sail with him in the flagship, but in the slow *Begoña*. The *broma* had done its work so well that a 500-ton ship foundered with much loss of life and stores. Many officers now wished to return, but it was agreed to refit at Santa Catarina, where there was news of Edward Fenton's English fleet in nearby waters: against his orders, Flores made no attempt to intercept them. There were more bitter disputes at Santa Catarina, where Flores sent three ships back to Rio de Janeiro for repairs. When the rest sailed again, on 13 January 1583, Alonso de Sotomayor, who seems to have tried to mediate, had had enough: he took his three ships (and according to Sarmiento many of the stores for the Straits) into La Plata and thence marched his 600 men across the Andes to Chile. The diminished fleet pressed on, and by February was at the Straits: twice Flores tried to enter, but each time the notorious tidal currents drove him out, and his honour, such as it was, was satisfied by the attempt. Disregarding pleas to wait in the shelter of Cabo Virgenes or the Rio Gallego, he set a course for Brazil, and Sarmiento, in far from speechless fury, had perforce to follow.²⁰

The ships were scattered by a storm, and Sarmiento reached São Vicente (near modern Santos) to find that the three sent back from Santa Catarina had attacked Fenton's ships, which got away after sinking the *Begoña*. Early in May what was left of the armada reassembled at Rio de Janeiro, and here Diego Flores announced that he would have no more of the enterprise. His

arguments did not lack substance: the Straits did not lend themselves either to fortification or settlement, and it was more important to make sure of the Brazilian bases, threatened by French and English privateers and Portuguese sedition.²¹ By his own account, Sarmiento humbled himself—we may doubt by how much!—but in vain. Flores took himself off with six ships, and at Parahaiba was lucky enough to surprise five French corsairs loading Brazil wood: as four of them were careening, the victory was easy, and on his return to Spain—getting in first with his story—it served to divert attention from his general conduct.²²

Sarmiento remained with five ships under Diego de Ribera; after some reinforcements and further desertions (including his engineer, J. B. Antonelli's brother), he was left with 548 men, women, and children. At least he was now his own master. It is a tribute to his astonishing drive and powers of command that the expedition did not collapse there and then. All but two years to the day from their final sailing from San Lucar, they wearily put to sea again (8 December 1583). On 1 February 1584 they were again off Cabo Virgenes, and the promised land was near.

The Cities of Jesus and the King

Three times they entered the Straits, penetrating almost to the Second Narrows, only to be thrown out again by the appalling tidal currents; finally Sarmiento decided to land in the shelter of Cabo Virgenes itself. The little colony began with a total population of under 350, of whom 177 were soldiers and 81 'pobladores', including 13 women and 10 children. For the formal founding of the City of the Name of Jesus, Sarmiento himself landed, according to Arciniega in full parade armour, and although on more workaday occasions he wore seamen's clothes, this would be in character. The colonists were in rags, 'and he who had a waistcoat had no jacket.'²³ To their leader, the 'plain clothed with odoriferous and consoling herbs' was indeed a promised land; what the wretched Andalusian peasants and artisans thought of these windswept and inexpressibly bleak steppelands cannot be imagined, the more so as the ships were at once blown off out of sight, and they were left with less than four days' rations, apart from some manioc flour and two sacks of biscuit. Soldiers and settlers alike, they were used to buckling to under hardship, and Sarmiento saw that they did so. He made inspiring speeches, and 'All answered that they were ready to obey and to follow to the end of the world as they had no other father'—and no other option; and for all but two of them this was to be in truth the very end of the world.

They scouted about for food, finding various edible roots and berries, fish and shellfish; vegetables, vines, and fruit trees were planted, including of all things quinces and ginger. Half a league from Cabo Virgenes a township was laid out, with town square (and gallows) and a sail-roofed church. Then, three days later, the ships came back and more stores were landed. It was agreed to beach one of the ships and use her timbers for building; unluckily, the beaching was

mismanaged and many stores, including half the flour, wine, and cannon were lost—even so, they were more than amply gunned, with twenty-two pieces in charge of Andrés de Viedma. But this incident led to a quarrel with Diego de Ribera, up till now a staunch supporter, and he left hastily, without waiting for despatches: *more suo*, Sarmiento put the worst possible construction on this defection. He was left with one small ship, the *Santa Maria de Castro*, in bad shape and lacking much of her gear.

Nombre de Jesus, although formed into a municipality, was only an advanced base, and the main work lay ahead. As regards terrain, the best site for a fort blocking the Straits would have been at the Second Narrows, but Sarmiento ruled this out as he feared that the currents would make it almost inaccessible to shipping, which would face a constant risk of being forced out into the Atlantic, as had happened so often already and was to happen again to the *Maria* on her first voyage west. He decided that the main position should be at Cabo Santa Ana, some forty kilometres on the hither side of the southernmost point of the mainland. On the first voyage to Spain he had noted this as a suitable site: it lay on the frontier between the two main Indian groups, with generally open steppe country towards the Atlantic, forested mountains to the west; a convenient port with ample wood and water, harbouring many deer and parroquets, which hinted at a mild climate; and a projected fort at the First Narrows could be reached in one tide.

Andrés de Viedma was to be left in command at Nombre de Jesus; it needed a resolute man, for the tiny settlement had already been attacked by the Indians. The *Maria* was sent ahead to Cabo Santa Ana to begin cutting timber, and after waiting three days lest she should again be driven back, Sarmiento set off by land on 4 March 1584, with a hundred soldiers. The many detours on this indented coast meant a total distance of seventy or eighty leagues; to make it on the eight days' rations they carried would have meant covering over fifty kilometres a day; Sarmiento, always reconnoitring ahead, must have covered a greater distance still. It was a ghastly traverse: clothing was inadequate to the autumn cold, shoes gave out and had to be improvised from hide and goatskin. Foraging produced occasional eggs of 'vultures' (rheas?), deer, berries, nuts and roots, but above all shellfish. They had to sacrifice their two remaining dogs and the few goats they had brought as stock; some very pleasant nuts, like chestnuts (probably Antarctic beech) gave them violent colics. There was a fight with some very tall and very valiant Indians, who killed one man and wounded ten. A little wine could be doled out to the wounded, but they, and some sound men, wished nothing more but to die among the reeds and bushes, and there were murmurings; somehow Sarmiento drove and cajoled them on, until on the nineteenth day they reached the limits of endurance: 'they would wait where they were, either for the mercy of God, or for death.' Sarmiento, whose writings show a compassion for the rank and file rare in his age, tried to rally them for a last effort: let it not be said that the King 'had no longer such men as he was wont to have in olden days',²⁴

and Cabo Santa Ana was in sight. Next daybreak he set out with a handful of followers, promising—with how much conviction?—to return when he met the *Maria*. Before he had gone two hundred paces he sighted her boat, and sent back the news: all came down to the beach, some crawling on hands and knees, and they learnt that the ship was harboured barely an arquebus shot away. An issue of bread and wine worked wonders.

On 25 March 1584 Sarmiento founded his second city, Rey Don Felipe; large wooden buildings were erected for the church and the royal magazine, sites allotted for town hall, clergy house, and a Franciscan monastery, magistrates were appointed, the township was palisaded and six guns mounted on a seaward bastion. There were the usual pathetically hopeful plantings. But rations were severely limited—twelve ounces of flour or biscuit and a half a gill of wine a day; basically they would have to live on the country. Shellfish, stewed with a bark like cinnamon, were a staple food, and there was a bizarre and macabre note: they contained so many pearls that it was tiresome to pick them out, ‘and at first, when they had no thought of perishing, and had hopes of escaping, they kept them . . . but, afterwards, when they found themselves in such hopeless case, they took no care of them’.²⁵

Not surprisingly, there was an incipient conspiracy to seize the *Maria* and escape; as soon as this was crushed, and fortunately after the people were under some sort of cover, it snowed for fifteen days. Sarmiento then decided to return to Nombre de Jesus, taking with him some guns for the First Narrows; he sailed on 25 May and reached the town that same night, to find that here also there had been a mutiny and an execution, short rations, and a fight with the Indians. Before he was able to land, a furious gale broke his sole remaining cable and drove the *Maria* out to sea. It raged for twenty days and return was impossible; after a nightmare voyage, in which they were reduced to gnawing leather, Sarmiento reached São Vicente on 27 June: the beginning of a new act in his tragedy.

At São Vicente, Sarmiento received little help; he went on to Rio de Janeiro, where the Governor Salvador Correa de Sá was more sympathetic, and indeed by and large the Portuguese seem to have been more helpful than his own countrymen. Diego de Ribera had not been unmindful of the colony, and with the stores he had left at Rio Sarmiento was able to despatch a small ship with flour and other supplies for the Straits; but Rio was then only a minor port, and it was necessary to go to Pernambuco for more adequate provisioning. Thence he headed south again, only to be wrecked at Bahia: ship and stores were a total loss, but for two or three barrels of wine and a gun, and Sarmiento, who had once declared that he would reach the Straits if he had to sail there on a plank, now got ashore, bruised and bleeding, on two boards roughly nailed together. . . . Here and at Espírito Santo he was given every help, and collected more stores, with which on 13 January 1585, he left for Rio de Janeiro, whence

his supply ship had sailed in December. He set off at once with his succours; once more a terrible seven weeks' storm drove him back to Rio, having jettisoned most of the stores and only holding the ship together with improvised cables. And there he found that the supply ship sent off in December had itself been driven back to that port.

He did not yet despair. His ship was patched up by pulling to pieces and burning an old wreck for its nails and iron gear; tar had to be got from Bahia, grease by catching two whales in the harbour. Now he had to face open mutiny: he quelled it by physical assault on the ringleaders and fair words to the rest. But the months dragged by, it seemed hopeless to continue these desperate improvisations in Brazil, and he decided to seek more effective aids in Spain. At the end of April 1586, Sarmiento sailed from Rio de Janeiro, ill but keeping on deck lest there be further insubordination. On 11 August he was in the Azores and there, in what were now *de facto* Spanish waters, he fell in with two well-armed English pinnaces. He had only twenty men; surrender was inevitable.²⁶

Prisoners of starvation

At Nombre de Jesus, Andrés de Viedma decided that anything was better than the inexpressibly bleak and wind-swept Patagonian steppes, and took his 200 or so souls to Rey Don Felipe, which from Sarmiento's accounts should at least offer them better shelter and more varied resources. They reached the town in August 1584, in the depths of winter, and were soon disillusioned: the forests and the beaches could support the small bands of Indians, habituated to the climate and with generations of experience in hunting and gathering; but not a large body of civilised men bewildered in their new and savage environment. In despair, Viedma sent 200 of them to make their way back to Nombre de Jesus, virtually a sentence of death on these prisoners of starvation: they were instructed to keep a close watch for any ships that might pass. . . . The rest waited at Rey Don Felipe. They waited through winter and the next summer; in the autumn of 1585 Viedma and his sixty or so survivors built two boats and set out for Nombre de Jesus. One boat was soon wrecked, though all in it were saved; Viedma took twenty men back to Rey Don Felipe, telling the rest to live as best they could along the beach. When summer returned he collected the survivors: all told fifteen men and three women. Towards the end of 1586 this handful set off eastwards again, with the aimless aim of reaching Nombre de Jesus:²⁷ the way was dotted with the bodies of those sent off on the same track two years before.

Off Terceira, Sarmiento had managed to throw overboard his papers and charts, but his rank was betrayed by his pilot. So notable a captive was received in England with honour. The English ships belonged to Walter Raleigh, prisoner and gaoler were kindred spirits, and it is very likely that Raleigh's obsession with El Dorado owed much to their long and friendly conversations. Far distant

from his Governorship, in more than a merely geographical sense, the Captain-General was received by Burghley, Howard of Effingham, and Elizabeth herself: he plumed himself on his conduct of an hour and half of Latin discourse with the heretic monarch, discourse so important and confidential that it could be reported only verbally to the King in person. He was soon released, in October 1586, without ransom, but charged with an ambiguous personal message from Raleigh to Philip, and almost certainly with peace feelers from Elizabeth herself.

He had a long conference with Parma, Philip's Governor in the Netherlands, and then set off, with Elizabeth's passport, across France: Viedma's remnant was probably nerving itself for the hopeless trek to Nombre de Jesus. And then, in a wayside tavern near Bordeaux, he was snapped up by a band of Huguenot partisans. This time his captivity was not to be as elegant as that in Raleigh's hands: eventually he was confined in a foul dungeon, where he lost teeth and hair, all the time negotiating for his ransom—a double haggle, with his captors and Philip's bureaucracy—and pleading for succours to be sent to his colony. At last Treasury agreed to advance the money—but only as a deduction from the considerable debt on the colony's account which was owed to Sarmiento by the Crown.

He was freed, broken in health and fortune, in October 1589; two years later the 'singular grandeza' of the King, and the liberal hand for which Sarmiento thanked him (perhaps not without irony), had not got round to settling his accounts. He had a fruitless interview with Philip, and then, like Quiros, entered on the dreary course of submitting memorial after memorial, moving but useless, crying out for the rescue of his colonists. The year after the Invincible Armada's shattered return was no time to put forward projects which could only weaken Spain in the main theatre of war; and in fact the non-decision had already been taken. In December 1586 Philip had asked three of his advisers what should be done: he had ordered two ships from Peru (we hear no more of these), should he send two from Spain? Only Santa Cruz approved; Medina Sidonia more realistically said that it was too late, the settlers by now would be back in Chile, or dead; soon this latter was to be true.²⁸

The rest is anticlimax. Sarmiento was employed as a censor of poetry, deleting at a stroke 109 sheets of a long verse narrative whose author was unduly appreciative of the pirate Drake, and of Mendaña, hardly less of a sin. When at last recalled to active service, he must have felt it too reminiscent of Diego Flores (now in prison for his Armada failure), for it was as almirante to an Indies convoy. His appointment to the fleet about to sail in October 1592 is the last we know of Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa; probably he died on the voyage, and all but one of his colonists had died before him.

January 1587: a ragged handful on a Patagonian beach saw four ships standing into the Straits; that night they lit fires, the ships' lanterns signalled back. In the morning a boat was seen pulling along the shore, and with Viedma's permission—there

was so much discipline left!—three soldiers ran to show a white flag where the boat must pass. It came to the beach, but the joy of the moment was shattered: the newcomers were not reliefs from Spain or Brazil, but Englishmen going to Peru. They offered passage, but the Spaniards drew back, fearful: these heretics would be quite capable of throwing their dupes into the sea. The English reassured them, saying that they themselves were the better Christians, and one of the three, Tomé Hernandez, stepped into the boat, which pushed off. Hernandez begged the leader to pick up his two comrades, and was asked how many Spaniards there were in all; he replied: twelve men, three women.

The General then desired this witness to tell the other two soldiers to go to the rest of their people, and that for his part he would come to embark them all, and that they were to wait for him . . . [but] When Thomas Candi went on board, seeing it was good weather for navigating, he made sail without waiting for the rest of the people to whom he had sent . . . ²⁹

Still, after four centuries, the bald statement chills the blood.

So Cavendish sailed on, to peer curiously through the streets of Rey Don Felipe, with its gibbet and its dead ‘in their houses, and in their clothes’; also, providently, to dig up four guns, and to give it the name it still holds: Port Famine, Puerto del Hambre (Plate XIX). This was not quite the end: three years later the *Delight* of Bristol was in the Straits: ‘by Port famine we spake with a Spaniard, who told us he had lived in those parts 6. yeeres . . . in an house by himself a long time, and relieved himself with his caleever [firearm] until our comming thither.’ They took him aboard, but on the return the *Delight* was wrecked near Cherbourg, and he was not among the six survivors.³⁰ Tomé Hernandez got away from Cavendish in Chile, and lived to make his Declaration in Lima in 1620: our only direct witness to those days of anguish and despair.

So ended Sarmiento’s dream: the last great Spanish action in these regions, and either the most useless and tragic in the annals of the sea or the apex of Spanish heroism, according to choice;³¹ but indeed one need not choose, for it was both. Nor, of course, was Spain the only country compelled ‘by pressing and perhaps greater exigencies to leave to their fate many heroic settlers’: at the very time of this agony in the Straits, far to the north the six-score English men and women of the lost Virginia colony were suffering and dying.³² With the resources of the time, colonisation of so remote and harsh a region as the Straits was probably logistically impossible, even had the expedition moved smoothly and well-found to its destination. Even in detail, the site chosen was unfortunate: when in 1843 the Chileans asserted their claim to the Straits, their original settlement of Puerto Bulnes, actually at Puerto del Hambre, lasted only six years before being transferred to a much more favourable position at Punta Arenas,³³ but the existence of this modern city of over 67,000 is scarcely conceivable without fuel-powered shipping.



Plate XIX. SARMIENTO IN THE STRAITS. An idealised Ciudad Rey Don Felipe realistically labelled 'now Port Famine', the fires of Tierra del Fuego, and an assortment of giants, including Pigafetta's arrow-swallower (cf. Plate VII). The toponymy reflects Magellan (B. de S. Iulian, C. 1100 Virgines), Drake (3 Ins. Draco), Sarmiento (Philippopolis), Cavendish (P. Famin, C. Froward), and the Dutchmen Cordes and van Noort in 1599–1600 (Oliuers B., Canal Maurity). From L. Hulsius's 'Collection of Voyages'; reproduced in J. Parker (ed.), *Merchants and Scholars* (Minneapolis 1965). By courtesy of University of Minnesota Press. ANU.

Yet legend would not let Sarmiento's colonists die so easily; together with the imaginary survivors of other luckless voyages, Simon de Alcazaba's and Camargo's, they were translated by popular imagination into the founders of the fantastic and magnificent 'enchanted city of the Caesars', hidden, somewhere in Patagonia, between two border ranges of diamond and of gold. As late as 1782, in the last great Indian rebellion, Gabriel Condorcanqui, styling himself Tupac Amaru II, 'raised multitudes, proclaiming himself "Inca, señor de Jos Césares y Amazonas"'.³⁴ Irony could hardly go further than this evocation of ghostly splendour.

The English reprise: Fenton and Cavendish

In England, the years after Drake's return were alive with predatory projects: 'Gentlemen of fortune, and gentlemen of no fortune, were about this time equally encouraged to distress the enemy.'³⁵ Already before he was back, but after it was known from John Winter that he had passed into the South Sea, the younger and greater Richard Hakluyt had envisaged, with considerable panache, the seizure of the Straits and São Vicente: a reclaimed pirate could be sent out 'as of himselfe, and not with the countenance of thenglish state', and a colony peopled with Cimarrons and convicts, men and women—

And planting over them a few good English captens . . . there is no doubt but that we shal make subjecte to England all the golden mines of Peru and all the coste and tract of that firme of America upon the Sea of Sur.³⁶

Officially, however, so long as relations with Spain were still fluid, though fragile, attention was directed rather to following up Drake's success with the Sultan of Ternate; this seems indicated by 'A project off a corporatyon of sooche as shall ventere unto sooche domyniones & contries scytuat beyonde the equynoctyall lyne', apparently of November 1580.³⁷ Drake was specifically proposed as life-governor of the company, and there is added an interesting request for the establishing of 'an howse of Contratacon w^t sooche orderes as weare grawnted by the K. of Spayne.' There seems to have been objection by the Muscovy Company, since the Moluccas, being north of the Line, were in its sphere, and the project was lost in the more exciting possibilities raised by the presence of the refugee Dom Antonio in England. These included occupation of Terceira in the strategically immensely important Azores, and as an alternative to go to Portuguese India, expected to rally to the Pretender, and to establish the spice trade from Calicut.³⁸ Ours was not the first 'Global Century'.

Despite the many alarmist despatches of the Spanish ambassador Mendoza (soon to be expelled for his plotting), these schemes got bogged down in personal and political disputes, and when Drake took to the seas again it was for the great West Indies raid of 1585–6, in which he took Cartagena but was not strong enough to go on to Panama itself. The Dragon's mantle fell in the first place on to the inadequate shoulders of Edward Fenton, a soldier not a seaman,

who replaced the original choice of Martin Frobisher as leader of the follow-up expedition; Frobisher's known toughness would at least have ensured that any piratical diversions would have been efficiently conducted. As it was, Fenton's voyage was as thoroughly mismanaged as any of which we have record, except Diego Flores's. Though Drake and the Muscovy Company had large shares in it, the enterprise was essentially Leicester's—the flagship of 400 tons and 40 guns was renamed the *Galleon Leicester*—and was well-found; it was wrecked by personal incompatibilities and the lust for the plunder of Peru. It never got anywhere near its objectives, official or other, and in fact its main interest is in the lurid diary, for very obvious reasons kept largely in cipher, of the chaplain Richard Madox.³⁹

Fenton's instructions were for a voyage to the East Indies and Cathay by the Cape of Good Hope, the Straits being specifically barred either going or returning, 'except upon great occasion incident'. This loophole was enough for the more ardent spirits, who included Sir John Hawkins's nephew William and Drake's cousin John, together with Drake's pilots on the circumnavigation, Blacoller and Hood; also the shady Protestant Portingall Simão Fernandez, who was all for plunder though not for the Straits, hedging neatly when the decision had to be made. The details of the fiasco need not detain us long. The four ships sailed in May 1582, far too late, and after some misadventures in Sierra Leone reached Brazil, where as we have seen they crossed the tracks of Diego Flores and Sarmiento. Dissension had begun in the English Channel, and now came to a head. Fenton himself, in his post-mortem apologia to Burghley and Leicester, stresses his honest intent; but according to Madox (who was an upright man) and William Hawkins, he had ideas of making himself a Pirate King at St Helena, counterfeiting the Portuguese flag and taking the carracks of the Carreira; 'He saith the queen was his love. He would go through the South Sea to be like Francis Drake.'⁴⁰ When it came to the point, he drew back, fearful of Spanish forces in the Straits. Off southern Brazil a council of December 1582 decided to turn back to trade and revictual at São Vicente; John Drake deserted and took his bark into La Plata, naturally to fall into Spanish hands. The Cape of Good Hope option was theoretically kept open, though Fenton probably meant to sell off his merchandise and make for home. At São Vicente prospects were ruined by the fight with the *Begoña*, and despite the murmuring of the crews, still eager for loot, Fenton gave over the voyage.

The real significance of this miserable affair is in its evidence of the over-mastering lure of the South Sea; in William Hawkins's words, 'ther is no hope for money . . . but by passynge the Straytes.'⁴¹ This, coupled with abysmal leadership, was enough to wreck a well-considered venture which might have taken English trade to south and east Asia two decades before the East India Company's eventual success. Yet Drake had shown that the two objectives of the Moluccas and Peru were not entirely incompatible, that a resolute leader might tap at once 'both the Inidia's of spice and Myne'.⁴²

Anglo-Spanish relations worsened in 1584, and Elizabeth, though still averse to open war, felt less need to maintain even an ostensible regard for Philip's claims and susceptibilities. A powerful fleet was planned for the Moluccas, probably to go by way of the Straits—fifteen ships and barks, twenty pinnaces, 1600 men, a third of them soldiers—under Drake's command; scarcely a peaceful trading venture. But the deepening crisis in the Netherlands after William of Orange's murder by a Spanish agent (July 1584), the seizure of English shipping in Iberian ports in May 1585, followed by the commitment of English troops under Leicester to the Dutch 'People's War'—all these compelled the retention of so great an armament in waters nearer home, and hence Drake was diverted to the West Indies.⁴³ The more distant field of the South Sea was left to private enterprise, and the first entrants were the dazzling courtier George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland,⁴⁴ and Thomas Cavendish, a young gentleman of good family and fortune from East Anglia, not one of the West Country brood of corsairs. Cumberland, apparently in collaboration with Cavendish, sent out two ships for the Straits and Peru in 1586, but they got only as far as 44°S and apart from the wanton robbery and burning of Negro villages in Sierra Leone and some scrappy fighting in Brazil, his captains achieved little. Their most useful prize was the Portuguese Lopez Vaz, captured off the Plate and brought to England to become a prime informant for Hakluyt.

Cavendish, who had gained experience on Grenville's 1585 Virginia voyage, was his own master: he sailed himself and had better fortune.⁴⁵ With his newly built *Desire* of 120 or 140 tons and two smaller ships, he left Plymouth on 21 July 1586 and reached Port Desire, north of Port St Julian, in mid-December, sailing again on the 28th. Cavendish had timed himself well, avoiding the need to winter in Patagonia, a sure breeding-ground for dissension and often mutiny and the overthrow of the voyage.⁴⁶ On 6 January 1587 he entered the Straits and, as we have seen, picked up Tomé Hernandez and examined the grim relics of Rey Don Felipe. He named Cape Froward, the southernmost point of the mainland, and beyond it was held up for a month by 'most vile and filthie weather', though finding 'at every myle or two myles ende an Harborough on both sides of the land.' On 24 February he passed into the South Sea, a passage of fifty days against Magellan's thirty-eight and Drake's sixteen.

At Mocha they had a brush with Araucanians who took them for Spaniards, but at St Mary (Isla Sta Maria) the subjugated Indians were very friendly after they had been 'made merie with wine' and convinced that the newcomers were none of their old masters. By 30 March they were at Quintero Bay, where Tomé Hernandez, naturally enough disregarding his 'deepe and damnable othes' of loyalty, made his escape, and two days later brought down upon them 200 horse; a dozen Englishmen were killed in the fight, and others captured. On 23–25 April they took a large ship and two barks in Arica roads, but the place was too well defended to risk a landing. The Spaniards had learnt the lesson of 1579, if as yet inadequately; two days later, Cavendish took a bark (with

a useful Greek pilot), and under torture the prisoners confessed that they had been carrying 'letters of adviso' for Lima. A raid near Pisco produced nothing but some provisions, and the taking of a 300-ton ship yielded no better plunder; the best prize had a general cargo worth £20,000 'if it had bene in England or in any other place in Christendome where we might have solde it.' Paita was sacked and wantonly burnt, by no means the last time that this little town 'of more importance than its wretched appearance would indicate' was to pay such a penalty for having the only safe anchorage on this part of the coast.⁴⁷

There had been sundry partings and rejoinings, but by 25 May all three ships, plus a prize, were assembled at Puna. The Indian lord of the island and his 'marvellous faire' Spanish wife had fled with 100,000 crowns, but his sumptuous house made a convenient headquarters and in a great storehouse there were ample supplies of pitch and fibre for cables; Pretty's description of the island, almost as large as Wight, is idyllic. Here they careened and secured a great deal of ships' tackling and iron gear, as well as the bells of the church, which they burned. There was some sharp fighting, in which nine men were killed and three taken, though they claimed to have slain nearly fifty Spaniards and Indians; after this they burned the town of 300 houses and four ships on the stocks, and 'made havocke of their fields, orchards and gardens'. An exciting fortnight; it is true that there was now open war with Spain, but it is also clear that Cavendish can hardly be described, like Drake, as 'un corsario sin crueldad'.⁴⁸

Soon after reaching Puna on 5 June, they burned their smallest vessel, for want of men to man her, and set course for New Spain, making a landfall in Costa Rica on 1 July; news of the raid reached Panama and two ships were sent out, two weeks late, while the Viceroy of New Spain did not receive warning in time. Two ships from Sonsonate were taken and burnt; they were of most value for the information received from a French pilot, Michael Sancius (Miguel Sanchez) of the course and expected time of arrival of the Manila Galleons. Guatulco was thoroughly sacked, the customary church-burning being marked, according to local tradition, by the miraculous preservation of a much-venerated Holy Cross; which then fell a prey to souvenir hunters and, after a 2000-folio enquiry into the incident, was removed to the cathedral of Oaxaca.⁴⁹ Cavendish bypassed Acapulco and touched at a number of small ports and bays to the northward, careening at Mazatlan before reaching Cape St Lucas, where he meant to lie in wait for the Galleon, on 14 October.

Up till now the voyage had not been very profitable: at least a score of ships and small craft had been taken and destroyed, but none of them had any treasure or small-bulk goods of great value. Real success, however, was now at hand, for on 4 November the 600-ton *Santa Ana* was sighted. The English were greatly outnumbered, but the Galleon had no guns mounted: 'As no other ships but ours have ever been sighted on this voyage . . . [the Galleons] have always sailed with little or no artillery, and with as little fear of corsairs as if they were in the river of Seville.'⁵⁰ The *Santa Ana* beat off the first English attack with small

arms, but could not cope with two handy ships carrying twenty-eight guns in all, and after a stiff fight of five or six hours she surrendered.

The voyage was now indubitably 'made': 122,000 pesos of gold, or about £70,000; pearls, rich silks, musk, altogether an investment of 1,000,000 pesos in Manila, worth twice that in New Spain.⁵¹ There was more than could be carried off, and most had to be burnt with the ship, but ample remained. Prisoners also were interesting: most of them, including Sebastian Vizcaino, were set ashore in Baja California, but Cavendish carried off two Japanese and three Filipino lads, a Portuguese 'Old China Hand', and a pilot who knew the Ladrones and the Philippines. For these he now set sail, reaching Guam on 3 January 1588 and passing through the San Bernardino Straits on the 14th.

The smaller of the two remaining ships had disappeared when they left California, and Manila was too tough a nut to crack with one galleon. Cavendish spent a fortnight cruising at will among the southern Philippines; he attempted to seize a new Galleon being built on Panay, but the local Spaniards were on the alert and beat him off. He departed with a flourish: 'our Generall sent commendations to the Spanish captaine . . . and willed him to provide great store of gold: for he meant for to see him with his company at Manilla within fewe yeeres. . . .' Bishop Salazar of Manila had to admit the 'more than human courage' of 'this barbarian infidel'; his bitterest grief was not for the loss of the *Santa Ana* and the ruin so caused, but that a mere youth in a wretched little ship should sail gaily and boastfully through 'an army of [your Majesty's] captains . . . he went from our midst laughing, without anyone molesting or troubling him; neither has he felt that the Spaniards are in this land to any purpose.'⁵²

On 8 February Cavendish was off Gilolo; for some reason he did not repeat Drake's call at the Moluccas; perhaps the sickness which broke out a few days later was already showing itself. Instead he refreshed himself in southeastern Java, where he cultivated very friendly relations with the local raja and also with two Portuguese, who enquired after their King Dom Antonio, reported by the Spaniards to be dead. Cavendish assured them that he was alive and honourably maintained in England, 'and that we were come under the King of Portugall into the South sea, and had warred upon the Spaniards there.' He also left three large guns, whether for the Portuguese or Javanese was not clear, and received enthusiastic offers that should Dom Antonio arrive, he would have at command the Moluccas, China (i.e. Macao), and the Philippines. This apparently successful piece of propagandist warfare did not prevent the two Portuguese informing the Malacca authorities about the visit.⁵³ Having thus laid foundations of a sort for future projects, Cavendish sailed for home on 14 May, by the Cape and St Helena: a week before entering Plymouth on 9 September they learnt from a Flemish ship of the defeat in August of the Armada, 'to the singular rejoycing and comfort of us all.' Truly a happy return.

The booty of the *Santa Ana*, much exaggerated by rumour, was substantial enough: probably about £125,000, perhaps two-fifths of the ordinary yearly

revenue of the Crown. Cavendish banqueted the Queen at Greenwich, but his reprise of Drake's achievement did not extend to a knighthood. Apart from its financial success, the voyage was very profitable from an intelligence point of view: it is apparent that in the East Indies Cavendish had been at least as much concerned with political warfare and the gathering of information as with plunder or spices, for which he had little room. The master of the *Desire*, Thomas Fuller, brought back detailed sailing directions for the whole voyage, and Cavendish had secured a great map of China, from which were deduced Chinese armed forces of 7,923,785 horse and foot! The English name had been brought to the Philippines, where Cavendish had been at pains to ingratiate himself with the Indians of Capul, who promised 'to ayde him, whensoever hee shoulde come againe to overcome the Spaniards'; in Java also his contacts were very genial. He might therefore congratulate himself on a well conducted and very promising reconnaissance, and he undoubtedly looked forward to a more solid exploitation of it on a second voyage.⁵⁴ That voyage was to be a disaster, and in fact no Englishman coming by the South Sea was to repeat his success until the days of the buccaneers, a century later.

The first attempt to do so was made within a year of Cavendish's return, by John Chidley and Andrew Meyrick, who sailed from Plymouth in August 1589 'for The South Sea, and chiefly for the famous province of Arauco on the coast of Chili', reported by Cavendish to be full of gold mines. Of Chidley's three tall ships, only one—the *Delight*—is heard of again, wrecked in Normandy with, as we have seen, the last Spaniard from Rey Don Felipe.⁵⁵

Already in 1589 Spanish reports were speaking of another linked venture by Cumberland and Cavendish, both for the South Sea and the latter for China as well. In the event, Cumberland went only to the Azores and Cavendish seems to have rapidly expended his gains from the *Santa Ana*, redeeming lands mortgaged for the first voyage, investing in some not very profitable semi-piratical ventures, and fitting out his second fleet.⁵⁶ This was on a large scale: he had the big *Galleon Leicester*, his own old *Desire* refitted, the *Roebuck* of 240 tons and 20 guns, *The Black Pinnace* which had brought Sir Philip Sydney's body home to a mourning England, and a small bark: at least 80 guns and some 350 men. His captains included John Davis, regarded by many then and since as England's greatest navigator of the day, under promise that 'when wee came back to the Callifornia, I should haue his Pinnace with my own Barck (which for that purpose went with me to my great charges) to search that Northwest discouery vpon the backe partes of America. . . .'⁵⁷ In Quinn's view, Cavendish's objective was not only the routine plunder of Peru, but also 'an English galleon trade with China [and perhaps Japan] that might emulate the fabulously rich Manila galleon itself.' To this end his two young Japanese and his Portuguese China expert would doubtless be most useful intermediaries.⁵⁸ With these high prospects he sailed from Plymouth on 26 August 1591.

Cavendish intended to begin by taking Santos in Brazil as a base, but they were becalmed in the Doldrums, and here, on a charge by the two Japanese that a Portuguese pilot was plotting desertions at Santos, Cavendish had 'the poore Portingall' hanged.⁵⁹ They suffered from scurvy and food shortages before reaching Brazil, but Santos was duly taken on 16 December (the people were all rounded up at Mass), though through negligence most of the local provisions on which Cavendish had relied were spirited away by the inhabitants. They did not sail again until 24 January 1592, sufficiently late in the season. The fleet was scattered by a storm off the Plate; although Cavendish had not fixed a rendezvous, the three large ships and *The Black Pinnace* were reunited in Port Desire on 16 March—already autumn. By this time morale was exceedingly low amongst what Cavendish called 'the moste abiect & mutanus Companye that ever was Caried out of Englande by anye man livinge'. It was not improved by the weather in the Straits, 'not durable for Christians', where in late April they had to shelter a few miles west of Cape Froward. Like Sarmiento's men, they were reduced to shellfish, cinnamon bark, and seaweed; on the *Galleon Leicester* forty men died in seven or eight days and seventy were ill, 'so that there was not 50 men that were able to stand vppon the hatches.' All the ships had lost or worn out many of their sails and cables; and it was not yet full winter.

In this extremity, Cavendish decided to put about and reach the East Indies by the Cape; after representations by the crews, and since neither Port Desire nor Port St Julian was really suitable as shelter for the larger ships, he agreed to return to Brazil to recuperate. As Richard Hawkins was to warn, 'all men are to take care, that they goe not one foote backe . . . for I haue not seene, that any who haue yeilded therevnto, but presently they haue returned home'—and he makes specific reference to Fenton and Cavendish.⁶⁰ Such a decision was all but inevitably fatal to the voyage, though perhaps often enough the only salvation for the voyagers, or some of them.

On the night of 20 May, not very far from Port Desire, Davis in the *Desire*, with *The Black Pinnace*, parted company. Once again, Cavendish had inexplicably failed to appoint a rendezvous; inexplicably again, although he thought that the two missing ships would make for Port Desire, he made no attempt to find them: all he did was to denounce 'that villaigne that hath bynn the death of mee and the decaie of the whole Accon, I meane Davys', and to sail on for Brazil. Meanwhile his scapegoat Davis, not meeting the General at Port Desire, refitted there and pressed on with the voyage, although it is true that his interest was probably exclusively with the Northwest Passage. He could not leave the port until 7 August, and may have been blown within sight of the Falklands; thrice he pushed through into the South Sea, in the dead of winter, losing *The Black Pinnace* there, until on 10 October he was finally driven back into the Straits. By the 30th he was back at the Penguin Island off Port Desire: they had made the second full passage from Cabo Deseado to Cape Virgins in seventeen days. They took on 20,000 penguins—dried, as they had not enough salt—and sailed

for England on 22 December. They lost twenty-one men in Brazil, surprised by the Portuguese while watering, and as a final horror the poorly preserved penguins rotted and produced a most loathly worm: 'there was nothing that they did not devour, only yron excepted.'⁶¹ Davis, more of a leader and less of a driver than Cavendish, kept them going, and on 11 June 1593 they reached Berehaven in Ireland—sixteen men, of whom only five were fit enough to work the ship.

Seven months earlier Cavendish had died. He had made his way up the Brazilian coast, fighting the Portuguese with more ill than good fortune. He considered—secretly, for fear of mutiny—stripping the *Roebuck* to refit and man the *Galleon Leicester*, pretending that he would make for St Helena to prey on the carracks of the Carreira, but really meaning to slip back to the Straits. But in the second of three fights with the Portuguese he lost twenty-five men out of eighty committed, and at this point the *Roebuck* deserted. On the flagship Cavendish managed to maintain his authority, partly by physical violence like Sarmiento's in like case, and even to induce his men—nominally at least—to make once more for the Straits. But the slaughter of all but two of thirty sick men ashore was too much for any remaining morale, and Cavendish bore up for St Helena. He missed it, and his men compelled him to go on northwards for Ascension. Cavendish was preparing himself to die; one can hardly say composing himself, for the bitter apologia he wrote, blaming everyone but himself, is the work of a man brought near to madness: 'amongst such hel houndes my spirit was Cleene spent wishinge my self vppon any desarte place in the worlde there to dye' and at Ascension he meant 'to haue there ended my vnfortunate lief.' But he missed that island also, and died at sea: a ruffianly spoiled child of fortune yielding up his life in an agony of spirit. Davis survived, to defend himself with dignity but point in *The Seamans Secrets*: after all, the 'runaway' was the last to return home.

The last English foray: Richard Hawkins

Sir William Monson, England's leading naval publicist of the early seventeenth century, was of opinion that the incursions of Drake and Cavendish, spectacular as they were, merely 'warned [the Spaniards], without annoying [i.e. injuring] them, to strengthen themselves in those parts . . . as appeared by the taking of Mr Hawkyns in the South Sea, 1594.'⁶² Stung by the Callao affair, the Viceroy Toledo had grandiose plans for fortifying Guayaquil, Paita, Callao, and Arica; these were lost in the obstructed 'official channels' of the Council of the Indies, but after Drake the engineer Bernardino de Tejada came to Peru and by mid-1587 had cast forty-four pieces for the new Viceregal navy; after Cavendish, he took in hand four forts at Callao, and gun-turrets were added to the Casas Reales on its waterfront.⁶³ Although the defences were still inadequate by 1590, Cavendish's successor Sir Richard Hawkins met with a much more efficient Spanish response.

Hawkins, son of the great Sir John, was twenty-five when he commanded a small galliot on Drake's West Indian expedition of 1584–5, and had a Queen's ship of 250 tons in the Armada fighting. His incomparable *Observations* show him as a thoughtful seaman and a delightful writer, though too easy-going as a commander.⁶⁴ Years later, after the peace with Spain, he stated his design as a trade reconnaissance in Cavendish's tracks; but it did not exclude plundering the Queen's enemies in Peru, and J. A. Williamson thinks that it may also have included a search for Terra Australis. It is rather doubtful that he had a proper commission, though he did have some official sanction. He sailed from Plymouth on 12 June 1593 with two ships, the *Dainty* of 300–400 tons and the *Fancy*, and a storeship.⁶⁵

The trans-Atlantic voyage was uneventful: English seamen had not yet learnt to appreciate the Portuguese course, which made its westing well north of the Doldrums, and although Hawkins made no stops in the Canaries or Sierra Leone, it was the end of October before he made a landfall at Santos.⁶⁶ By this time he had only a couple of dozen sound men out of his original 164, owing to scurvy; but treatment with oranges and lemons, 'a certaine remedie for this infirmitie', produced a rapid recovery. This was all he could get at Santos, however; the Portuguese politely warned him off, and in his weakened condition he could only obey; in any case, he had neither the calculated daring of a Drake nor the bandit instincts of a Cavendish to lead him to defy the warning. He was able to complete recuperation at some islands north of Rio de Janeiro, where he burnt the storeship. Sailing again for the Straits on 10 December, he ran into a storm off the Plate, and the *Fancy* deserted: almost a standard combination. On 2 February he sighted an unknown land, and 'in perpetuall memory' of his Virgin Queen's chastity he named it 'HAVVKINS-*maiden-land*.' This, though his description is rather too favourable, must have been the Falklands.⁶⁷ He sighted Cape Virgins on 10 February 1594 and had a difficult passage of forty-six days; his account is chiefly notable for an entertaining essay on penguins—the word seemed Welsh, and brought to mind Prince Madoc and '*Motezanna* King (or rather Emperour) of *Mexico*.'

On 29 March he entered the South Sea and three weeks later was off Mocha Island, making very wary contacts with the Indians. Hawkins intended to keep well out to sea to escape observation and to make his first strike well north of Callao; but his company was avid for loot and forced him to raid Valparaiso. Here they took four ships with general cargoes, 'good Merchandize in *Lyma*, but to vs of small accompt'; but a fifth ship came in from Valdivia with 'some good quantitie of Gold'. Hawkins ransomed the ships, exchanging courtesies with the local notables; but Alonso de Sotomayor ('a noble Souldier, and liberall Gentleman') was waiting on the shore: in Lima he told Hawkins that he had set an ambush with 300 horse and foot. Hawkins was naturally on edge, regretting the impetuous greed of his crew, and especially nervous of the local wine, which despite all precautions by 'day and night, overthrew many of my people.' It was

clearly not going to be, as heretofore, an easy walkover; and, as he had feared, messages were already on their way north. The *Dainty* put in at Coquimbo and looked into Arica, and now Hawkins had more trouble with the crew, who were fearful of being defrauded of their share of the prize and insisted that all treasure should be locked up, one of the three keys to be held by their delegate. Too many captains did so defraud their men, and it is typical of Hawkins's fair-mindedness that he recognised this and condoned (he could hardly help it) this first appearance of the shop-steward in English history.

Surprise was now lost: the Viceroy at Lima, the Marquis de Cañete, had already received news from Valparaiso and sent out six ships under his brother-in-law Don Beltran de Castro, while the whole coast northwards was alerted.⁶⁸ Three of the ships were well-gunned, but the crews, though enormously outnumbering Hawkins's seventy-five men, were a scratch lot, apart from 300 trained soldiers. Off Pisco, south of Callao, a sharp little engagement took place: the Spanish ships, though useless in bad weather, were much better adapted to the normally light winds of the coast than was the *Dainty*, and showed a disconcerting ability to get to windward. Luckily for Hawkins, lack of fighting experience caused the Spaniards to miss their opportunity, and when unusually heavy weather came on, their light spars and large expanses of light cotton sail could not take it: the capitana lost her mainmast and both the other large ships were also damaged in spars and sails. The *Dainty* was able to slip away between them, but it was a narrow escape.

Hawkins now set course for the Bay of Atacames in northern Ecuador, purposing to refit and then 'depart vpon our Voyage, with all possible speede': he reckoned without his crew. Don Beltran returned to Callao, where he was received with popular insult; but he was soon to put out again with two ships and a pinnace; his flagship, according to Hawkins, had thirty bronze guns, most of them heavy pieces. The crews were weeded out, but still outnumbered the English by at least ten or twelve to one; it seems that they now had some more efficient officers, the almirante, on Hawkins's own showing, being a really first-class fighting seaman.⁶⁹

On Hawkins's way to Atacames two ships were chased but got away; he had thought that no ship afloat could have gained so much on the *Dainty*, but to his grieved astonishment the Spanish ships were able to outsail him with foresail and mizzen only. He was now anxious only to get away, but once more the insubordination of his crew ruined his chances. They insisted on taking a pinnace to chase a sail sighted from Atacames and failed to return, as ordered, on the next day, when Hawkins meant to sail for New Spain; he was detained in the bay four days longer than he had reckoned. He was actually weighing anchor, on 18 or 19 June, when Don Beltran's ships stood in. Despite their apparently overwhelming superiority, however, it took three days' hard fighting to overcome Hawkins's little company. At one point the Spaniards offered good terms, but Hawkins in a magnificent speech—doubtless embellished in

tranquillity, but still magnificent—rallied his men: ‘Came we into the South-sea to put out flagges of truce? And left we our pleasant *England*, with all her contentments, with intention or purpose to avayle our selues of white ragges?’ They were also fired with wine. But at last the *Dainty*, riddled with great shot and with nineteen dead, was brought to surrender; Hawkins had received six wounds, two of them serious, and was ‘out of hope to liue or recover’; considering that ‘the honour or dishonour, the wel-fare or misery, was for them, which should be partakers of life’, he consented that they should accept the twice-offered terms not only of quarter but of repatriation to England.⁷⁰ The English were treated with every kindness and courtesy, but it took a long time,



Plate XX. PTOLEMY TRANSFORMED: WYTFLIET 1597. An academic view: remnants of Marco Polo's geography (Beach, Maletur, Locach) are linked by Terra Australis to Tierra del Fuego; Japan has more or less fallen into its right place, Anian and Quivira are prominent; but although Noua Guinea is separated from Terra Australis (mere guesswork) the Spanish discoveries in the Pacific are ignored, and the Indonesian region is less realistic than on Ribeiro's maps of 1527–9 (cf. Fig. 4). But fundamentally Ptolemy has been not so much augmented as demolished: his enclosed Indian Ocean and his Sinus Magnus, the great gulf beyond Farther India (Plate I), have vanished for all time. From C. Wytfliet, *Descriptionis Ptolemaicae Augmentum* (Louvain 1597), facsimile published by Theatrum Orbis Terrarum BV (Amsterdam 1964). By courtesy of Mr N. Israel, Amsterdam. ANU.

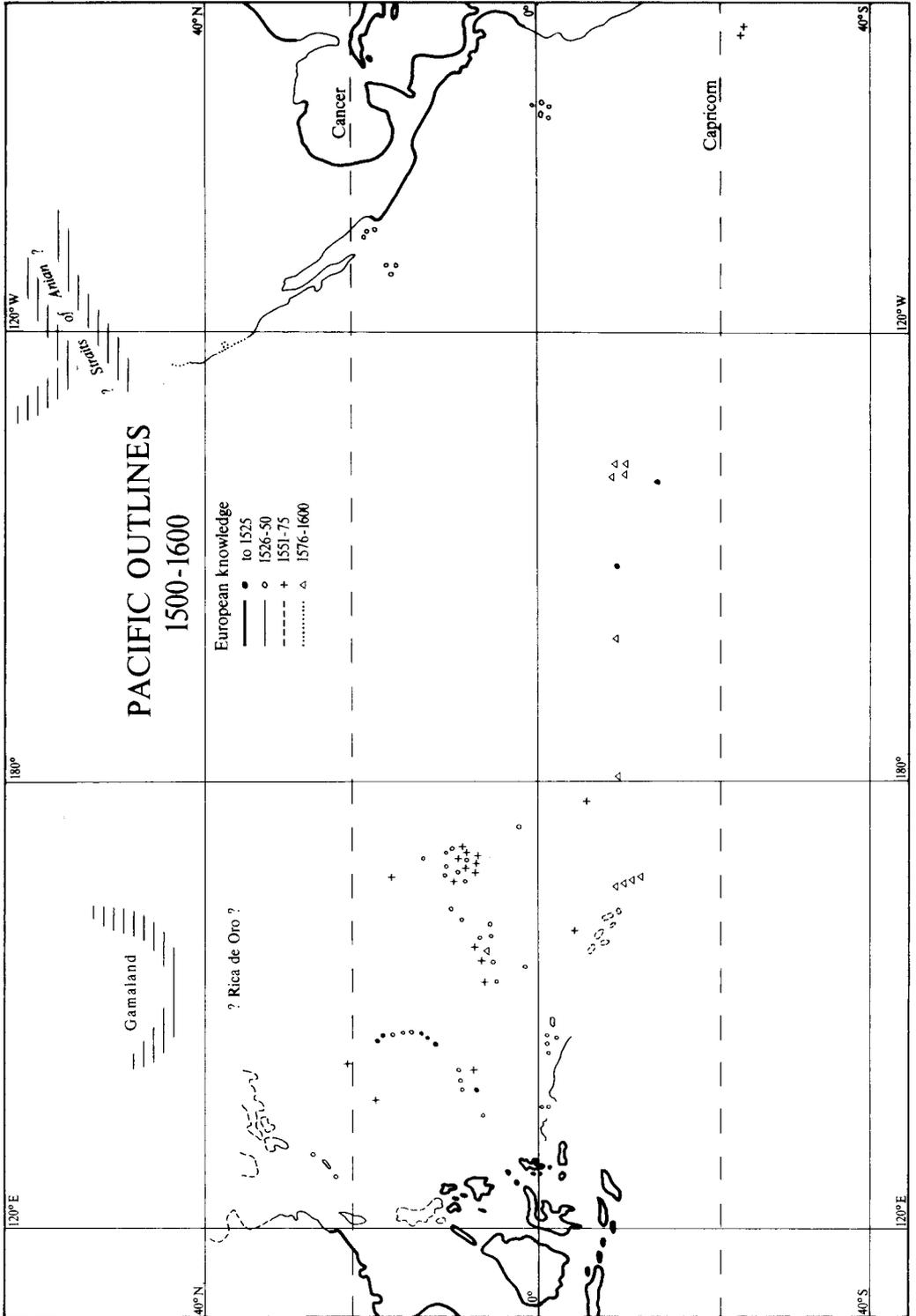
and much effort by Don Beltran, who considered his personal honour at stake, before the Spanish authorities were brought to fulfil the terms. Hawkins himself did not reach England until 1602, though most of his men had preceded him. Meanwhile the *Dainty* was exhibited at Panama as a trophy of war: the first prize taken by the Spaniards in the South Sea.

This was not quite the last fling: in 1596 Sir Robert Dudley, Leicester's son, sent out three ships under Benjamin Wood 'for the straits of Magellan and China', but Wood took them by the Cape route and the expedition dissipated itself in aimless incursions in the Indian Ocean.⁷¹ But indeed the war itself had become an aimless stalemate: Drake and Sir John Hawkins had died on their mismanaged West Indian voyage of 1595–6, and although Cadiz was sacked in 1596, in the next year both Essex's 'Islands Voyage' and the last great Spanish invasion effort were fiascos; Burleigh and King Philip died in 1598, an era was ending. But in 1600 the East India Company was chartered, and in the next two years James Lancaster opened the path of the future for English enterprise by his successful trading voyage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope.⁷²

The final English attack on Spanish America returned to the Isthmus where Drake and Oxenham had begun: in 1601 William Parker, in a brilliant surprise, took the newly fortified Porto Bello; but the treasure fleet had sailed only a week before, and 'the treasure-house of the world' was empty.⁷³ The old Queen died, and in 1604, under James I and VI, came peace; there was to be no further English attempt on the South Sea until Sir John Narborough's in 1669. The little ports between Valdivia and Acapulco were indeed often to be in terror of *corsarios luteranos*, Callao itself blockaded; but the flags arrayed against them were not English but Netherlandish. The Hollanders had taken over.

The century's work

When our story opens, Europeans were merely on the threshold of the Pacific: in 1500 no European had seen any shore of the Ocean, and since Marco Polo probably only a few missionaries had ever been even on its border seas. By 1600 the outlines of the East Indies and the China coast were tolerably clear, there was active trade with Japan, and a regular shipping line across the Ocean between Manila and Acapulco; the eastern shores from California to Tierra del Fuego were known to Europeans, and from Acapulco to Valdivia were the scene of a lively coastwise traffic. The northern coast of New Guinea was known, though Australia was scarcely imagined, unless as a hypothetical Terra Australis; the Portuguese may well have sighted much of the continent in the 1520s, but this was not on record. In the Ocean itself, many islands had been sighted, some visited, including the great Solomons group; and if they were cartographically floating islands, at least the Ocean was delimited east and west, and it was known that within it were many places of rest and refreshment (Fig. 24). The geographical revolution may be evaluated by comparing the fifteenth century



world map of Ptolemy in Plate I with its academic revision by Wytfliet in 1597 in Plate XX. It was a great achievement, attained with wretched technical resources and by scarcely imaginable suffering.

Despite Jesuit and other relations, the great empires of Asia were still, in European minds, lands of mystery and fable, although in total there was an immense amount of solid information available to merchants and scholars, and this was already exerting a marked influence on European thought and art, as Donald Lach's massy volumes attest.⁷⁴ Across the Ocean, two great unknown empires had been discovered and subverted, whole nations all but extirpated, and on their ruins had been erected a strange new imperium stretching from New Spain to Chile and La Plata; their treasures had at once enormously stimulated and distorted European economies. And already some of the finer spirits of Europe were drawing inferences unflattering to the assumptions and the self-image of Western Christendom: Montaigne had written those devastating essays 'Of Cannibals' and 'Of Coaches', in which by implication the court of Charles IX appears scarce as civilised as that of some petty Brazilian chief. The silks of China, the spices of Ternate and Tidore, the silver of Zacatecas and Potosi, had been bought with blood and iron 'and the sweete liues of multitudes of men.'⁷⁵

◀ *Figure 24.* PACIFIC OUTLINES, 1500–1600. Placing of islands perforce somewhat approximate.

